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THE MEANING OF MUSIC

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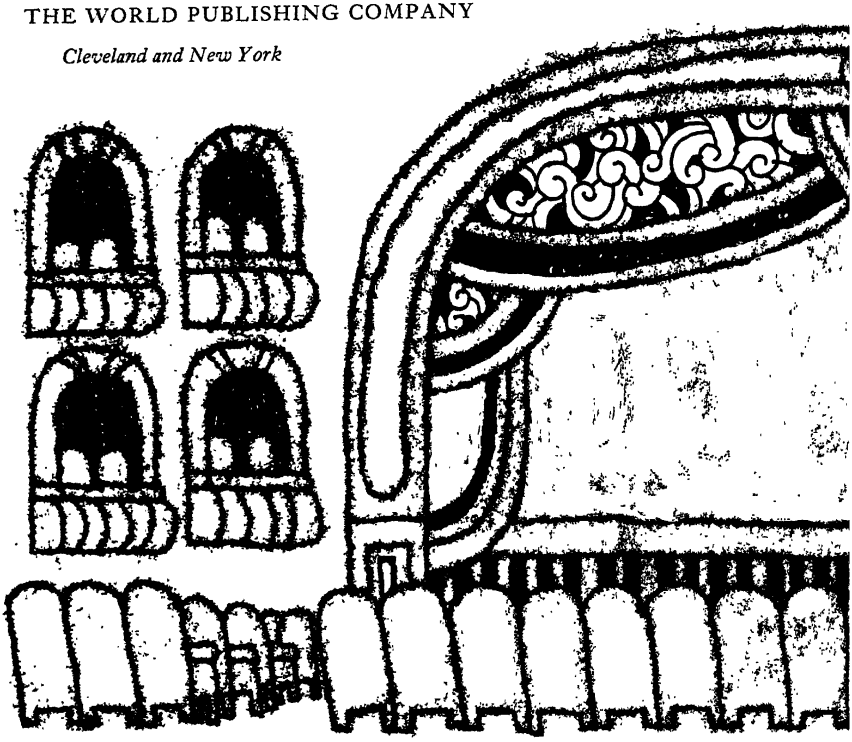
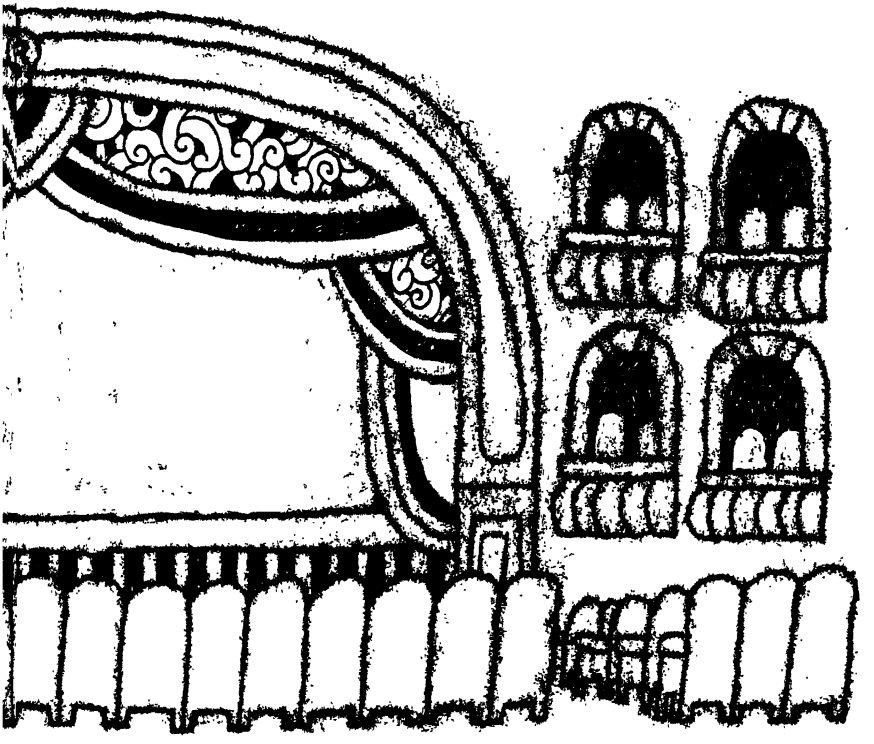


JEAN SELIGMANN AND JULIET DANZIGER

OF MUSIC

The Young Listener's Guide



Illustrated by Donald Leake

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Foreword

The authors of this book have wrestled successfully with one of the most difficult of tasks—discussing music, a complex art that often defies description except in its own terms. What is more, they have accomplished this for young people, who, like all listeners to music, will derive much more pleasure from their listening if they know something about the conventions of our musical language, the various forms in which it has been cast, and the great composers associated with those forms.

In order to achieve their laudable aim, the authors have wisely concentrated on carefully selected types of musical expression that the young person may encounter today either in his home or the concert hall. Their choices have been discerningly made

and although the young person who reads this will have much more to learn about music as he grows older, he will be adding to what he has acquired here rather than eventually disregarding it as oversimplification for juveniles.

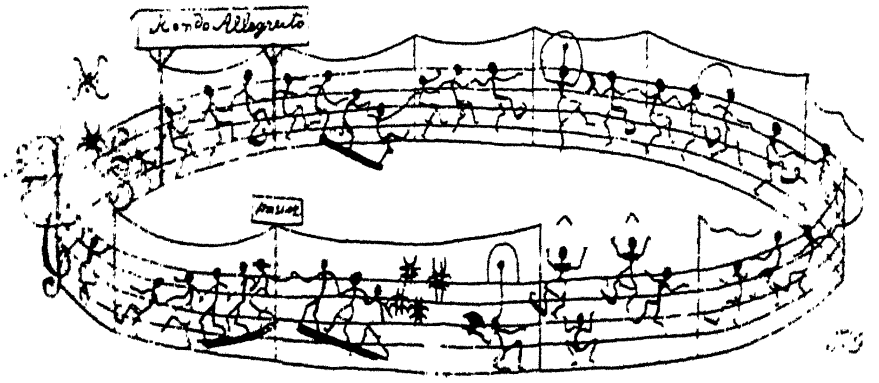
Our audiences of tomorrow are the young people of today. In this lucidly written, admirably condensed introduction to music, its authors have provided our young people with a concise guide that will be informative as well as provocative of a lifelong interest in an art that includes some of man's noblest utterances.

MARTIN BERNSTEIN
Professor of Music
New York University

THE MEANING OF MUSIC

1 / *What Is Music?*

What is music? It is not a mystery, as some people seem to suppose. Like almost everything else in the world, music is made up of definite ingredients. The only truly mysterious thing about it is that some human beings have been given the genius to put these different ingredients together in such a way as to create great and beautiful and lasting music. The rest of us have to be content to hear and enjoy, and perhaps play, the great music that men of genius have created. And the best way to understand and appreciate music is to listen to a great deal of it; to play, if possible, some instrument yourself; and to know something about the various ways works of music are constructed.



Since music is something that we hear, the materials of which music is made are also those which we hear. In other words, music is made up of patterns of sounds arranged in patterns of time.

Sound is an exceedingly important part of our daily lives. Close your eyes for a moment and just listen. Perhaps you hear the rumbling of a train, or a boy whistling, a baby crying, a mother calling to her child, a dog barking, the toot of an automobile horn, the wind blowing through the trees, crickets chirping, the far-off call of a foghorn. Or you may hear your neighbor's radio or television set, or perhaps someone playing on the piano or violin. You probably hear something, at any rate, and what you hear is sound, or a number of sounds. In our conversations with our friends, in most of our entertainments such as plays, movies, and especially concerts, sound plays a vital role.

As this book is about music, and music is made up of sounds, let us find out what sound really is. We can see a painting with our eyes, and touch it with our fingers, but sound is something

that can only be heard. It is something that comes to our ears through the air.

We live in air. Every time we make the slightest motion we stir the air around us, though we cannot see it move. When you knock on a door or strike a table, a quivering is set up in the wood itself as well as in the air around it. These quiverings, or back-and-forth movements in an object or in the air, are called vibrations. Vibrations travel out into the air, somewhat like the ripples circling out in all directions in a quiet pool of water when you throw a pebble into it.

When vibrations strike our ears, we hear a sound. But we would never have heard a sound if something had not started the vibration, if there had not been the air to carry the vibration to us, and if we had not ears to receive it.

There are many kinds of sounds. They can be loud, soft, sweet, harsh, dull, sharp, shrill and so on. Usually, sounds that are harsh or unpleasant, or in some other way distressing to our ears, are called noise. When sounds are agreeable to the ear we call them musical sounds, or tones. Actually, it is often hard to distinguish between noise and music. And often, too, it is a matter of opinion. When you blow across the top of a soda bottle, for instance, is the sound a noise or a musical tone? Perhaps to your father who is reading the newspaper it is a noise, but to you it may sound like the low tone of a flute. At a symphony concert the crash of cymbals is musical when it comes in at the right place, but most people would consider it a noise if the cymbals fell to the floor during the concert.

TONE

What is a musical tone? Almost all things that we can see or touch can be more or less easily described. Bricks have roughness, shape, and color. Beads have smoothness, roundness, and color. Flowers have smell, form, and color. But we cannot

see or touch musical tones. They can be described only by how they sound to us. And in order to give a description of a musical tone, we shall have to describe it in four different ways.

PITCH

We say that a tone is high or low. The highness or lowness of a tone is known as its pitch. The tone of a policeman's whistle has a high pitch. The average human voice used in everyday speech is of medium pitch. The rumble of thunder is of low pitch. You can make an interesting experiment in pitch yourself. Take a tall glass. Strike the side of it with a spoon. Then pour water slowly into the glass, hitting it with the spoon as it fills up. You will hear the pitch of the tone grow higher and higher.

Pitch depends on the number of vibrations per second of the sounding body that produces it. When a musician sounds his A, for example, so that the musicians can tune their instruments, that A produces 440 vibrations per second. Our ears can hear pitches ranging from about 16 to 16,000 vibrations per second.

DURATION

Besides having pitch, a tone also has duration—that is, longness or shortness. If you ring a doorbell and keep your finger on the button for a long time, you are producing a long tone. If you lift your finger immediately after pressing the button, you will produce a short tone.

INTENSITY

A musical tone also has loudness or softness, or intensity. If you strike a key on the piano very lightly, it will produce a very soft tone; strike it hard and it will produce a loud tone.

TONE COLOR

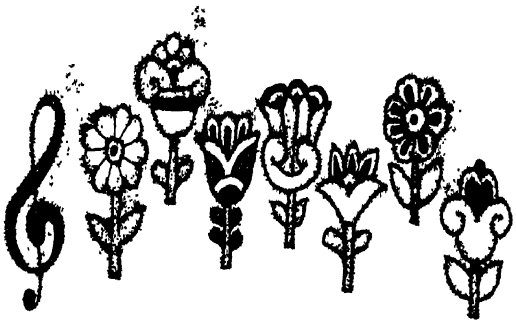
Tones also have what is known as tone color. We know that objects like bricks and beads and flowers have color. But tone color is not green or red or blue, naturally, for a tone is not something we can see. Tone color is rather the quality of a tone. A tone played on the violin, for example, has a different

tone color from a tone of the same pitch played on the piano or the saxophone. Each musical instrument has its own tone color. No two singers have voices that sound exactly alike. Every individual human voice has its own distinctive tone color.

We can speak of tone colors as thick, thin, light, dark, sharp, brilliant, dull, smooth, coarse, warm, cold, fuzzy, velvety, round, or even neutral.

Pitch, duration, intensity, tone color—every musical tone has these four characteristics. No one is more important than any other. In listening to music, however, we do not separate these characteristics one from the others. They are all blended together.

Musical tones, then, are the raw materials of music. Just as a wall may be built up of bricks, or a necklace made up of beads, or a bouquet made up of flowers, or words made up of letters, so music is made up of musical tones. But we must put the bricks in rows and pile them up to make a wall; the beads must be strung to form a necklace; the flowers must be arranged to make a bouquet, the letters put together to form a word. Musical tones, too, must be arranged in some order to create music.



2 / *Musical Patterns*

All of the various types of music—the folk song, the waltz, the symphony, the fox trot, and so on—are merely some of the many ways of arranging musical tones. A composer arranges these tones into patterns. All music is made up of different kinds of tone patterns. They will become easier to recognize as you listen to more and more music. And then, too, you will usually hear these patterns repeated in the same composition—patterns of melody, patterns of rhythm, and patterns of harmony.

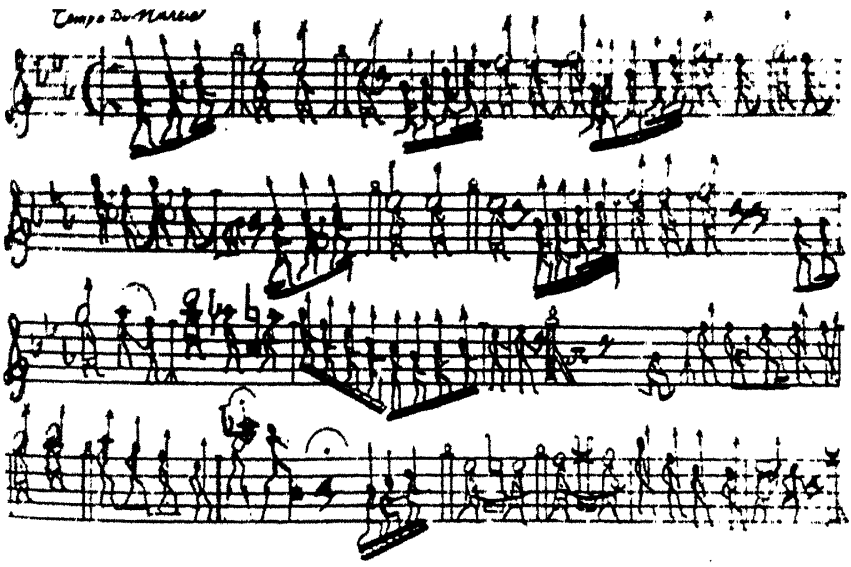
MELODY

Perhaps you have heard some music that you thought had no melody, but that seldom is the case. Almost all music has melody, but in some works it is more difficult to detect than in others.

When we talk, one word follows another in such a way as to make what we are saying have meaning for the listener. That is, we group words into sentences and each sentence expresses a thought or an idea. The composer does the same thing with musical tones. He makes one musical tone follow another in such a way as to have musical meaning for the listener. And when several tones are made to follow one another to produce musical meaning, the resulting pattern is called a melody.

RHYTHM

Another pattern in music is created by rhythm. When we hear a march being played by a military band, probably the first thing we notice about it is the marked rhythm, the clear one-two, one-two that makes us want to march in time to the music. And as the music goes one-two, one-two, the marching feet go left-right, left-right. If we listen carefully, we will hear that certain beats are accented. That is, there are strong beats and weak beats. For some reason it has usually been the custom for men who march to step out on the strong first beat with the left foot. Thus we get a definite pattern which is created over and over again: STRONG-weak, STRONG-weak;



ONE-two, ONE-two; LEFT-right, LEFT-right. This is the rhythm of a march and you will find that every march that you hear has this rhythm.

The rhythm of the march is one of the simplest kinds of rhythm, but even in the more complicated rhythms you will always find that there are some beats that are strong, and some that are weak. The strong or accented beats occur over and over again, forming a regular pattern.

Some people tap their feet in time to music. Some clap their hands to mark the rhythm. You will find that they usually tap or clap hard for the strong beats, and more gently or not at all for the weaker beats. The next time you listen to music, see if you can hear the strong beats repeating regularly.

But it is not only the accenting of beats that creates rhythm. Rhythm also results from the differences in the length of the notes which are played or sung. You can imagine how dull a piece of music would be if each note were played for the same length of time as the one before it, like the ticking of a clock or the chiming of a church bell. Sing to yourself a familiar tune like "Jingle Bells" or "Pop Goes the Weasel" and notice the differences in length of the tones:

Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way . . .

Pop goes the weasel . . .

You can see from these examples that some notes are longer, some shorter. You will discover further that these longer and shorter notes are usually put together in groups. And these groups are repeated in such a way as to form a pattern.

We have, then, two kinds of patterns within the idea of rhythm: patterns produced by the accenting of certain beats, and patterns produced by the differences in length of the tones. You will find these rhythmic patterns in all music if you listen

for them. Sometimes they are easy to follow and sometimes they are difficult. But no piece of music has ever been written without some sort of rhythm.

TEMPO

The speed at which these rhythmic patterns are played is called tempo. The same rhythmic patterns may be played at different rates of speed. You probably have seen moving pictures of champion swimmers in action. Sometimes a slow-motion picture of these swimmers is shown on the screen and you see the identical strokes at a slower speed—that is, in a slower tempo. Tempo should not be confused with rhythm. Rhythm is produced by accent patterns; tempo is the speed at which these patterns move.

Composers often show in what tempo they want their music played by labeling it with such words as *Allegro* [fast, lively], *Adagio* [very slow], *Andante* [walking pace], *Presto* [very fast], *Vivace* [lively]. These are Italian words. Composers have used many Italian words for their tempo marks since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when many of the important musicians of the day were Italians. Today, of course, composers frequently use their native language, as well as Italian, to indicate tempo.

All of the musical patterns we have discussed so far are produced by tones played or sung one after the other—that is, in succession. But we can arrange our musical tones in still another way. We can play several different tones at the same time. Sound patterns created by playing two or more tones at the same time are called chords. Everyone knows how the guitar player can create sound patterns by sweeping his fingers across the strings of his instrument. When he does this, we are not so much aware of the individual notes as we are of their patterns as chords.

Chords, then, are heard by us whenever two or more tones are sounded together—or in very rapid succession. We hear chords when a pianist presses several keys at the same time on the piano. We hear chords when we listen to a band playing on the football field. We hear chords in listening to a string quartet or a symphony orchestra.

Let us suppose, for instance, that we are listening to a band playing the familiar march "The Stars and Stripes Forever." We certainly are aware of the rhythmic patterns of the music; and as the various sounds appear one after the other we are also aware of the patterns of melody. But we perceive still another pattern—for as different tones fall upon our ears at the same time we recognize them as chords.

The total number of possible chords that can be created is unbelievably great, and composers are still finding new chord patterns for us all the time. Great as their number may be, however, we can classify and describe chords in a general way without too much trouble. If you listen carefully to the chords of a piece of music, you will discover that some chords sound restful. The music might end with their sounding. Such chords are called consonant chords. Other chords, however, seem to have some sort of drive. They seem to demand that some other chords follow them. The music would sound incomplete if it ended with them. All chords that give this restless feeling are called dissonant chords. Do not think that dissonant chords are at all painful. What they do is to create a sort of suspense that will not be relieved until we come eventually to a consonant chord.

CONSONANT CHORDS

DISSONANT CHORDS

The art of constructing chords and of arranging attractive successions of consonant and dissonant chords is called harmony.

HARMONY

Ludwig van Beethoven

Think of the mastery of harmony involved in creating the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven! When you are listening to this rich expanse of beautiful music you are hearing, among other things, a succession of chords that lasts about seventy minutes.

FORM

The smaller musical patterns of melody, rhythm, and harmony are held together by a larger framework. Musicians call this larger framework of a piece of music its form.

Before an artist starts to paint a picture, he decides what it is to be—a portrait, a landscape, or perhaps a still life. The architect, before designing his building, knows whether it is to be a church, a school house, a city apartment or a country bungalow. A cook, too, does not gather together her ingredients without first deciding what she is going to make—a pie, a pudding, or a cake.

In much the same way the composer of a piece of music decides beforehand whether he is going to write a song, a symphony, or an opera. In other words, before we can construct anything we must know how we are going to shape or arrange our materials. In the case of an art work this shape or arrangement creates its form. When you see on your concert programs or your phonograph records titles such as "suite," "symphony," "concerto," "overture," "sonata," "opera," etc., these words describe the forms into which a composer has arranged his musical materials. You will enjoy music more if you have some knowledge of these forms.

When we go to an exhibit of portraits, we have a general idea beforehand what we are going to see: pictures of people. But if two painters paint a portrait of the same person, the pictures will not be exactly alike. The portraits may have the same form, but each will be different in its details.

So too with music. That is, most symphonies have certain features in common, most overtures have certain features in common, and so on with all the musical forms. This book will help you to know beforehand what to expect when you are going to hear a sonata or a symphony or a fugue or a concerto, or some of the other more usual forms of music. It will make the larger framework familiar to you. Naturally, the methods of treating the framework—or form—differ since each composer uses a customary framework in his own way. It is not the framework itself, but the unique genius and inspiration with which a composer clothes it that makes a musical work great.

Other words for form are "structure" and "design." In any design there must be some sort of balance, that is, a harmonious arrangement of its different parts. One must be able to feel that

its parts bear some logical relationship to one another. This feeling of logical arrangement can be produced largely through the use of repetition or contrast of these parts.

The idea of logical arrangement through repetition and contrast may be observed in many ways in our everyday life. In the design of the plate put before you at lunch, in the arrangement of your furniture, in the structure of the human body, in the pattern of the linoleum on your kitchen floor—in almost everything that you look at you will find either repetition or contrast, or both.

The use of repeated or contrasted patterns and parts (in designs and structures) gives a feeling of unity and variety to our *eyes*. In music, too, there is repetition and contrast of parts and patterns, and these give a feeling of unity and variety to our *ears*. Not only is there repetition and contrast of whole parts or sections of a musical composition, but also of the patterns of melody, rhythm, and harmony within the parts themselves.

The musical use of repetition and contrast can be observed quite simply in a song like "Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes."

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss within the cup
And I'll not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sip,
I would not change for thine.

The song begins with a musical idea: "Drink to me only . . ." etc. Then there is a repetition of this musical idea: "Or leave a kiss . . ." etc. Now comes a different musical ideal, a contrast-

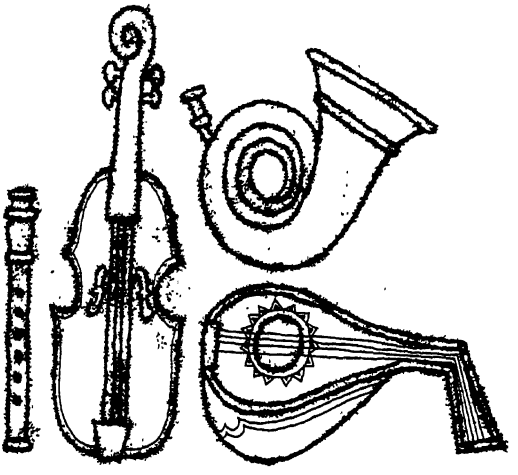
ing one: "The thirst that from . . ." etc. And, finally, there is a repetition of the first part: "But might I . . ." etc.

THREE-PART FORM

This song is a good example of what is known as three-part form, a term that you will meet over and over again in music. It is one of the most common of musical forms, A-B-A. Many folk songs, marches, dances, most popular music, as well as innumerable longer pieces, are written in this form, usually with a repetition of the first part—that is, A-A-B-A. In longer compositions there is naturally a much more elaborate use of the three-part form than in this simple song. Also, the repetition may not always be an *exact* repetition.

Contrast and repetition are achieved in music not only in melody, rhythm, and harmony, but also through the use of differing tone colors, changes in loudness and softness, changes in tempo, to mention just a few ways. When you listen to music attentively you should be able to hear these frequent changes of the different basic elements of music.

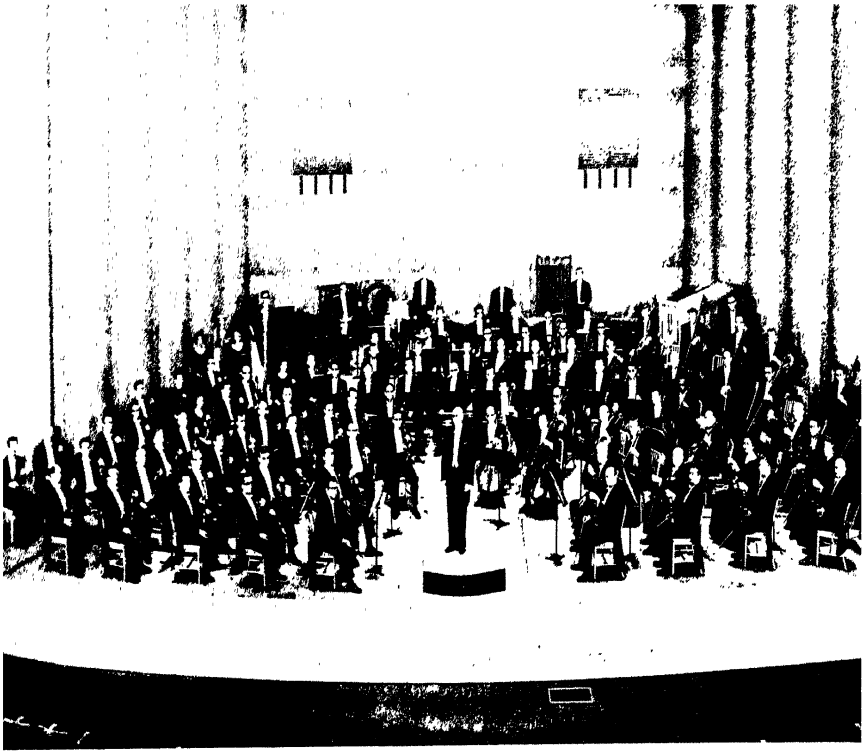
We see now that every piece of music we hear is built up on a definite framework. And within this framework (or structure, or design) that we call form, patterns are repeated or contrasted like the patterns in any other structure or design. As we go on with this book, we shall discover that many musical frameworks or forms are almost as easy to know as those of everyday objects.



3/ *Instruments That Make Music*

When you first look at a performance of a symphony orchestra, you will be conscious of a stage filled with a jumble of players and instruments. If you look carefully, however, you will soon discover that these players with their instruments are arranged in groups. You will notice that players of the same kinds of instruments are grouped together on the stage.

There are four large groups of instruments in a symphony orchestra: the string instruments, which are usually sounded by drawing a bow over strings; the woodwind instruments, and the brass instruments, pipelike instruments into which the



The Cleveland Orchestra

players blow to make sounds; the percussion instruments, an assortment of instruments of various shapes and uses, which the players strike.

THE STRINGS

Over half the instruments in the orchestra belong to the string section. You probably recognize the instruments in the pictures: the violin, the viola, the cello, and the double bass. These are the four members of the string section. They all look somewhat like the same instrument built in different sizes. They are made of wood and are hollow. Four strings made of gut are stretched across them. A bow—a wooden wand with horsehairs stretched from end to end—is drawn across the strings with the right hand, while the fingers of the left hand press down upon the strings at different places to produce different pitches.

Violins

Sometimes the player will pluck the strings with his fingers when certain crisp, short-clipped sounds are desired. This plucking is known by the Italian word *pizzicato.*

The string instruments constitute the most important of the four orchestral groups because they can be made to do so much more than the woodwinds, brasses, or percussion instruments. They can be made to sound a greater number of pitches. They can supply more tone colors and they have a wider control over loudness or softness of tone than any other instruments.

The violin is the smallest and most popular instrument in this group. An expert performer can do many things with the violin. He can make it sound sweet and lilting, or serious and grave. He can play slow, smooth passages, or rapid and difficult

ones. In the orchestra there are about thirty-six violins. It is necessary to have this large number because the violin is not a loud instrument and its voice would be drowned out by those instruments with more powerful voices. The violins are so useful, in fact, that they are divided into two sections: the first and second violins. This does not mean that the first-violin section is more important than the second. They are divided into sections because the composer often wants them to play different parts.

The viola, the second member of the string section, looks like the violin, and is held and played the same way. It is larger

Cellos

than the violin, however, and its deep, somber tones lend it great dignity. There are usually ten violas in the orchestra.

The third member of the string section is the cello. Its real name is violoncello, but most people call it by its shorter name, cello. This instrument is much larger than the viola. You can easily recognize it because it is held between the player's knees. Its weight is supported at the bottom by a metal pin that rests upon the floor. The tone of the cello is rich and vigorous, deeper than that of the violin and viola. It is an instrument that can do many things because of its very great range. It can give forth melodies in most expressive tones and can also supply a full

Double basses

background for the other instruments. The symphony orchestra usually has twelve cellos.

The double bass is the fourth member of the string instruments. It is also known as the bass viol, contrabass, string bass, or bass. The double bass is so huge that the player has to sit on a high stool behind it while the instrument rests against him. We rarely hear it played as a solo instrument. Because of its tremendous size, thick strings, and immensely deep tone, its function is mainly to give a rich and firm foundation to the orchestra. The name of double bass originated because for a a long time it was used only to "double" or duplicate or strengthen the bass as supplied by the cellos. There are customarily ten double basses in the orchestra.

THE WOODWINDS

Originally the term "woodwind" indicated the material of which the instruments were made, plus the fact that it was "wind" from the player's lungs which produced the tones. Today the woodwinds are usually made of wood with the exception of the flute and the piccolo, which are almost always made of silver.

The woodwind group is divided into four families: the flutes, the oboes, the clarinets, and the bassoons.

The instruments in the flute family are the flute and the piccolo.

If you look at the flute while it is being played, you will see that it is held and played differently from all the other wind instruments except the piccolo. It is held almost straight out to the side, rather than being tilted up or down. It is made to sound by blowing air across a hole along the side of the tube near the end of the instrument. The fingers make the different notes by pressing down the keys that cover the holes in the side of the instrument.

Flutes

Music for the flute is usually sprightly and delicate. It can play the most rapid and complicated passages with ease and nimbleness. When playing at a high pitch, the tone color of the flute is always bright and clear, while in the lower pitches it is cool and rich.

The piccolo is half the size of the flute. The word *piccolo* is Italian for "little"—the instrument used to be called *flauto piccolo,* or little flute. The name, through time, was shortened to just piccolo. The piccolo is played just like the flute, but its tone color is shrill and piercing. It is a small instrument, to be sure, but one piccolo playing loudly can easily be heard above the rest of the orchestra.

There are usually three flutes in the orchestra, and one of the flutists will play the piccolo when it is needed.

In the oboe family are the oboe and the English horn. The oboe is a medium-sized, pipelike instrument with a thin, reed-like mouthpiece. For all the other wind instruments the player needs a great deal of breath, and uses his rests to draw new air into his lungs. But with the oboe just the opposite is true. The oboe requires only a very little air to make it sound, so that the oboe player has to use his rests to let air out of his lungs. If you watch the oboe player you will see that he seems to be exerting great effort in order to play his instrument, and this effort consists in his letting out only very, very little air.

Once you have heard the unusual tone color of the oboe you will undoubtedly recognize it again. It is twangy, nasal, penetrating. In fast passages it has an almost lighthearted quality, but in slow passages its voice has been described as "pleading" or "beseeching."

There are usually three oboists in the symphony orchestra. One of these three players will play an instrument related to the oboe, that is, the English horn.

The English horn is almost like the oboe, except that its end is pear-shaped, and it is longer in size and hence lower in pitch. Its name is anything but accurate, since it is neither English nor a horn. This instrument is one of the most serious and grave in the whole orchestra. That is why the English horn can so admirably bring forth moods of sadness, loneliness, and grief in music.

In the clarinet family are the clarinet and the bass clarinet. The clarinet is an instrument that has considerable range of pitch, loudness and softness, and of tone color. It is also extremely agile. The clarinet seems to resemble the oboe from a

Brass—trombones and trumpets—and horns, with woodwinds in the foreground and kettledrums at the back

distance but actually its construction is quite different. The clarinet player therefore does not have the oboist's problem of holding back his breath. The tone of the clarinet is smooth and clear and pleasant, often resembling the human voice. There are usually three clarinetists in the orchestra.

The bass clarinet is a larger clarinet of lower pitch, with a grave and serious tone.

In the bassoon family are the bassoon and the contrabassoon. The bassoon, a long, pole-like instrument, is the bass of the woodwind group. Its tone is hollow and quite serious. It is a flexible instrument—rapid and difficult passages can be played upon it, so that it often produces a rather humorous, clownish

effect. But it may also be used to deliver solemn, serious passages. There are usually three bassoonists in the orchestra. One of these will occasionally play the larger, deeper-pitched contrabassoon, an instrument that is rarely heard by itself.

THE BRASSES

The members of the brass section are the horn, the trumpet, the trombone, and the tuba. As you would suspect, they are called the brass instruments because they are all made of brass. Like the woodwinds, the brasses are made to sound by air blown from the player's lungs. But the manner in which this air produces a tone is different. In the woodwinds the air is blown either across a hole at the end of the instrument (the flute and piccolo), or into a reed at the end of the instrument (the clarinet and bassoon). When playing a brass instrument, however, the mouthpiece is placed against the lips, and it is through altering the tension of the lips and by changing the length of the instrument's tubing that different pitches are produced. The length of the tubing is changed for the trombone by means of its slide; for the other brass instruments this is done with valves.

Of the brasses, the horn—sometimes called the French horn—is the most expressive. It is easy to recognize because of its coiled tubing and the broad, flaring bell. Before it was used as an orchestral instrument, this horn was a simple hunting horn. Its tone is warm, round, and full, and has been described as "heroic." The horn also has the widest range of all the brasses, and is seldom silent for long in the symphony orchestra. There are usually four horns in the orchestra, but sometimes as many as eight are called for.

The second instrument of the brass section is the trumpet. The trumpet possesses great brilliance and flexibility. It can reproduce many different types of passages—dignified and serious at one moment, light and gay the next. It can execute broad,

flowing melodies, and also rapid, complicated ones. There are usually three trumpets in the orchestra.

The third member of the brass instruments is the trombone. This instrument may be quite readily identified by its slide—an outer tube made to slide back and forth over an inner tube to produce different pitches. It is more easily blown through than the other brasses, but it also uses up the player's air supply very rapidly. The quality of the trombone is stately, noble, and majestic. There are usually three trombones in the orchestra.

The fourth member of the brasses is the tuba. Like the double bass, the tuba is not often used as a solo instrument as it is rather ponderous and heavy. Its main purpose is to provide a full-bodied foundation for the rest of the orchestra. There is one tuba in the orchestra.

PERCUSSION

The instruments in the percussion section are those which are made to sound by striking. The most important and oldest members in this group are the kettledrums, or timpani. A kettledrum looks like a large copper kettle, with sheepskin or calfskin stretched across the top. Its pitch can be changed by turning large screws around the edge of the drum. The tightening or loosening of these screws controls the tension of the stretched skin, called the "head," of the drum. The player makes the kettledrum sound by striking upon the head with hammers with large felt ends. You might think that it does not require much musical talent just to "bang" on a drum. Just the opposite is true. The performer on the kettledrum must be an exceptionally fine musician. First of all, he must have what is called absolute pitch—the ability to know or identify from memory the pitch of any tone in the scale. He must be able, moreover, quietly to tune his drums to whatever pitch is needed no matter what the rest of the orchestra is dinning in his ears.

The timpani

And thirdly, while all this is happening, he has to keep counting the rests on his music so as to come in at the right time with the correctly tuned drum, or drums. If you watch the timpanist in a symphony orchestra, you will see that a great deal of his time is spent rapidly turning the screws, with his ear down close to the drums, and softly tapping the drumhead, in order to set the correct pitch.

The kettledrums may be used to produce thunderous effects, to accent the rhythm, to reinforce loud passages, and even in certain instances to render a melody. There is usually one kettledrum player in the orchestra, commanding from two to four drums.

Max Neuhaus with percussion instruments

There are many other percussion instruments in the orchestra which may be briefly described, since they are used mainly for special sound effects.

Snare drum—a small, untuned drum, commonly used in marching bands, played with two wooden sticks.

Bass drum—a large, untuned drum with a very deep tone.

Cymbals—two platelike brass disks that are struck together to produce a sharp, metallic clash.

Glockenspiel—a set of small, tuned metal bars in a frame. When struck by hammers, it produces high, bell-like sounds.

Xylophone—a series of small, tuned wooden bars on a stand, struck by small wooden hammers.

The harp

Gong—a huge brass disk struck by a large felt-headed stick and producing a grave, ominous tone.

Chimes—large tubes struck with a mallet, producing deep, resonant tones like church bells.

Triangle—a metal bar shaped into a triangle open at one corner. When struck with a small metal rod, it produces a clear, tinkling tone.

Instruments like the castanets, tambourine, the rattle, the wood block are also among the better-known members of the world's great number of percussion instruments.

The groups of instruments which we have just described might be called the bow, blow, and strike groups. Besides these, there are two other important groups of instruments of the orchestra. One is instruments whose strings are plucked, the other, the keyboard instruments.

INSTRUMENTS WHOSE STRINGS ARE PLUCKED

Of this group, the harp is the only one which really has a permanent place in the orchestra. No doubt you have heard the rippling music of a harp, but perhaps you did not know that the strings are actually plucked to produce this effect. Another effect achieved on the harp is made by a quick sweep of the fingers over the strings. This is called a *glissando*. At the base of the harp are seven pedals by means of which the pitches of the strings may be raised or lowered one half tone or one whole tone. The use of the harp in the orchestra is for special color effects, for accenting, or as an accompaniment. There are usually one or two harps in the orchestra.

Other instruments whose strings are plucked are the guitar and the mandolin, but these are rarely used in the orchestra.

KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS

The most familiar of the keyboard instruments is the piano. Although it has not yet become a regular member of the symphony orchestra, certain modern composers have included it in their orchestral compositions. The piano is actually a string instrument which is made to sound by hammers that strike against the strings. When keys of the piano are pressed down they cause felt-headed hammers to strike the strings. There are eighty-eight keys—black and white—on the piano. You will hear more about this most popular of all instruments in a later chapter on piano music.

The celesta, a small keyboard instrument, gives forth delicate, clear notes like soft chimes. The mechanism of the celesta is like that of the piano, except that the hammers of the celesta strike against metal bars instead of against strings. It has a little more than half as many keys as the piano. There is one famous solo part for celesta; it appears in the "Dance of the Sugarplum Fairy" from Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*.

The organ, an instrument used mainly in church, but occasionally in the orchestra, has a number of keyboards. One is operated by the feet, the others by the fingers. Music is produced by letting air into pipes. The largest organs have thousands of pipes and thus can achieve many effects and tone colors.

THE CONDUCTOR

What is the conductor's part in the symphony orchestra? What, specifically, are his duties?

The conductor has two duties to perform. He chooses the music which is to be played, and he sees to it that the orchestra plays it in accordance with what he believes are the composer's intentions.

Choosing the music means selecting pieces that will create a satisfying and enjoyable program, as well as an interesting selection of music of varying types and periods. The art of choosing programs is called "program making." Not every great conductor, unfortunately, is always a good program maker.

Arranging a program is something like planning a meal. For most people a meal is more interesting and enjoyable if it has variety and balance. To achieve variety and balance, the conductor may plan to present some of the great classics, such as the symphonies of Mozart and Beethoven, and in the same program he may include some works of composers of our own time.

The conductor, George Szell, communicates with the pianist, Rudolf Firkusny, during performance of a concerto

The length of each composition must be taken into account. The overture to Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* lasts about three minutes, while the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven lasts over an hour.

Some works, like the Mozart overture mentioned, are gay and sparkling and require no really intense concentration on the part of the listener. But others, like the profoundly earnest

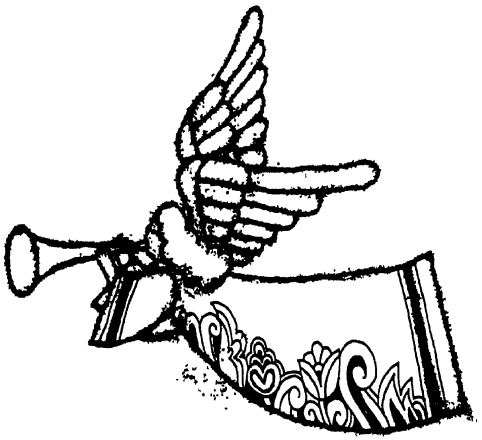
Thomas Schippers, internationally known symphonic and operatic conductor

Ninth Symphony of Beethoven, demand continuous attention and concentration from listeners who wish to grasp its full import. These differences must be considered in the making of a well-balanced program.

The second task of the conductor—realizing the composer's intentions—is more difficult to describe. When you attend a concert, what you hear is the result of many hours of rehearsals by the conductor and the members of the orchestra. In the music that the conductor has before him there are, in addition to the notes themselves, many other directions for the perform-

ance of the work. There are directions for the tempo of the music, for loudness and softness, for general mood or style, to mention a few. The conductor must see to it that not only are these directions observed, but that the members of the orchestra play the music correctly as written; that they play with fine tone quality; that they play together; that the string players bow properly; that the wind players breathe properly; that the various tones appear in satisfactory balance, and so on. Some conductors use a baton, a short stick held in the hand, to beat time, give cues, indicate phrasing, among other things.

As you can see, a conductor must be a very sensitive musician, one who knows a great deal about individual instruments of the orchestra and about the various styles of orchestral music. And finally, a great conductor must have a special spark of some sort in his personality which inspires his orchestra members to give of their very best.



4 / *The Fugue and Bach*

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) is the first of what have been called the three great *B*'s of music. The other two are Beethoven and Brahms. There are, to be sure, other composers whose names begin with *B*. But these three so overshadow all the others that they are often known as "the three *B*'s."

Does music run in families? In the case of Johann Sebastian Bach it certainly did, for he was one of a line of fifty German musicians to bear this family name. His father was the town musician in the German city of Eisenach, where besides playing violin and viola for weddings and festivals and other celebrations, he chimed the hours and spread the alarm for fires. His older brother, Johann Christoph, was a composer and

organist. It was mostly through this brother that Johann Sebastian received his early musical training; he was taught to play the violin, viola, and organ when still a young boy. And indeed, the musical tradition was continued by Johann Sebastian Bach's own sons, ten of whom became musicians. Two of them, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and Johann Christian Bach, are fairly well-known composers in their own right. But Johann Sebastian is undeniably the supreme genius of the Bach family.

The music of Bach fills fifty-four large volumes—yet during his lifetime he was better known as an organist than as a composer. For in Bach's day, composing music was not so much a matter of inspiration as it was part of a job. Bach's principal duty was to compose music for the Lutheran Church. He had to provide appropriate music for every Sunday of the year, and special music for services held on church holidays such as Easter and Christmas. For these many occasions Bach composed the music much the way any competent and conscientious craftsman would do his job.

One important thing to remember about Bach is that he did not write music for the concert hall. The greater part of the music of Bach was written to be performed in the church by choral singers, a small orchestra, and organ. The rest of his music was composed for musicians performing either alone or in small instrumental groups (chamber ensembles) in the drawing rooms of the nobility. Today, to be sure, some of this music is played by an orchestra in the concert hall instead of as Bach originally intended it.

Music written because it is needed for a certain day or occasion might easily be dull and humdrum. The music of Bach, however, is as dramatic and moving as any you will ever hear, and ranks among the world's most inspired works of art. Even

as a schoolboy Bach looked on music as a way of expressing religious feeling, and he composed much of his music "for the glory of God." When little more than twenty, he became a church organist to serve God through his music.

Bach composed in many forms, and on all of them he left the mark of his genius. But the form that we can connect most often with the name of Bach, since it appears with such great frequency in his works, is the fugue.

THE FUGUE

What is a fugue? It is a composition which uses a single melodic idea or theme, called the fugue subject, in a special way.

A fugue is written in parts known as voices—and these are called voices whether they are played by an instrument or actually sung. This special way of handling a theme is called many-voiced writing. (Musicians use the word "polyphonic" instead of "many-voiced." It comes from the Greek word meaning many sounds.)

THE FUGUE SUBJECT

We may compare the entrances of the fugue subject in a fugue to the arrival of guests at a party. Upon entering the door, the first guest says, "How do you do; it is so nice to see you." The second guest arrives a few minutes later and in turn says, "How do you do; it is so nice to see you." The second guest then joins the first guest and they proceed to discuss the weather or the affairs of the world or the latest moving picture. Meanwhile, the third guest arrives and he, too, upon entering says, "How do you do; it is so nice to see you," and then goes in to join the general conversation. This continues until all the guests have arrived.

In a fugue the voices enter one after another to announce the fugue subject, just as the guests entered one after another and repeated, "How do you do; it is so nice to see you." The theme, or fugue subject, is announced by the first voice at the begin-

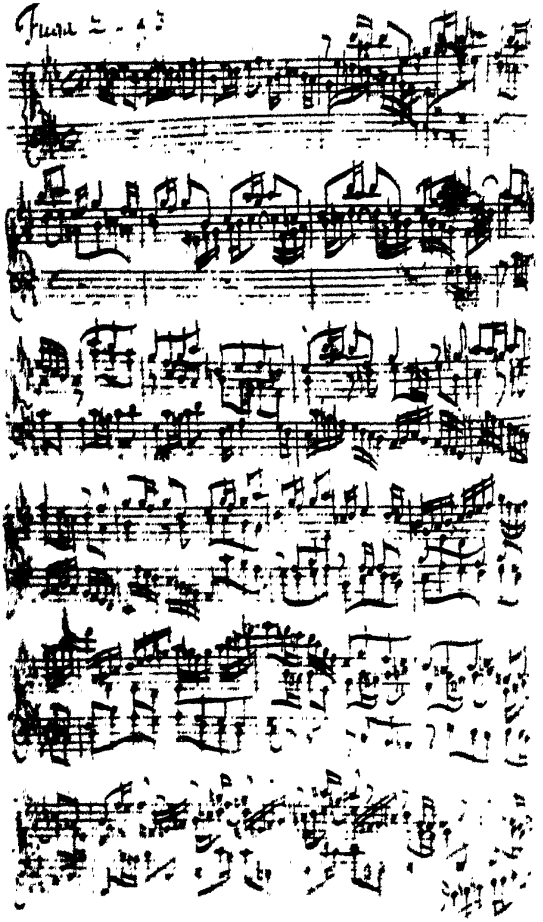
ning of the work, and it is repeated in turn by each voice as it enters. Most fugues are written for three or four voices.

After one voice has finished the announcement of the subject, the next voice takes it up. When the subject has been announced by all the voices, the composer then goes on to treat the subject in any way his imagination suggests. He may turn the fugue subject upside down. Or he may make the fugue subject twice as slow or twice as fast. He may make the subjects overlap—that is, a second voice will follow on the heels of the first before the first has completed the announcement of the theme, and the third will follow on the heels of the second, and so on. Thus the different voices pile up on each other in what may sound like confusion, but which produces an exciting musical effect.

He may interweave the voices, tossing the theme from one voice to another. Often the voices of the fugue are not heard all at one time but are made to enter and exit over and over again like characters in a play. These are only a few of the more common methods used by composers to develop the fugue subject.

PRELUDES, FANTASIAS, AND TOCCATAS

You rarely hear a Bach fugue by itself. Usually a musical composition of contrasting mood and style is played directly before the fugue. Bach called these pieces preludes, fantasias, or toccatas. All you need to remember about these three names is that they describe music which flows along freely, as the fancy of the composer dictates. These Preludes and Fugues, Fantasias and Fugues, and Toccatas and Fugues were written for the organ or keyboard instruments called clavichords and harpsichords. (There were no pianos during most of Bach's lifetime.)

Bach wrote a series of forty-eight preludes and fugues, known as *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, for young musicians

A page from Bach's manuscript of his The Well-Tempered Clavier

"anxious to learn." "Well-tempered" refers to a system of tuning that was used in Bach's day, and clavier meant any keyboard instrument.

The subjects of Bach's fugues are, for the most part, expressive melodies which under his masterful treatment reach great heights of beauty and emotion. His crowning achievement in fugue writing is a musical work called *The Art of Fugue*. This gigantic composition lasts over two hours and consists of

twenty fugues written on the same fugue subject—which lasts about twelve seconds! That a work of this length on this simple theme is sufficiently animated and varied to hold the listener's interest for so long is indeed proof of Bach's amazing richness of imagination and his great genius.

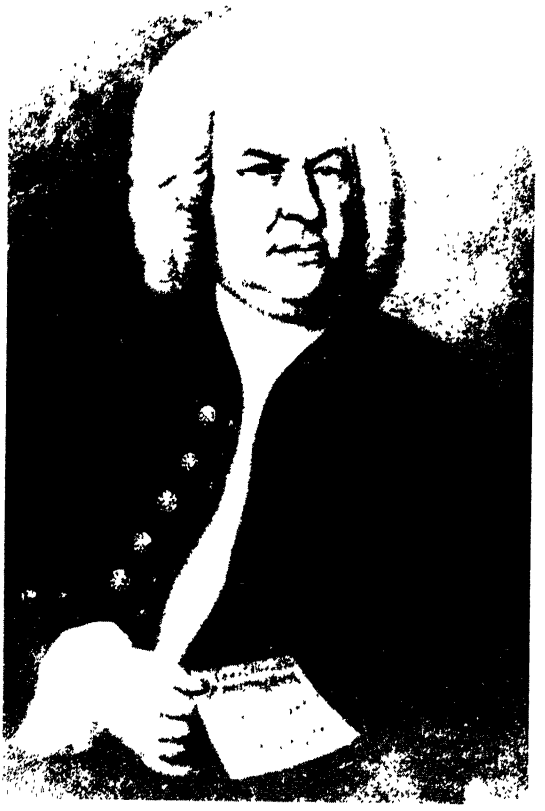
INVENTIONS

Other keyboard works of Bach, perhaps among his best-known, are the compositions called Inventions. If you play the piano, you may be familiar with this collection of short pieces. Bach wrote them as exercises for his sons and pupils. It is interesting to think that if Bach had been your music teacher, you would have been practicing these same pieces on a clavichord or harpsichord instead of on a modern piano. The Suites or Partitas, groups of short, dancelike pieces, are also widely performed by pianists today.

It is in the realm of choral music, however, that Bach made his most important contribution. Solo singers and a small chorus took part in the church services of Bach's day just as they do today. But unlike present-day custom, a small orchestra was used in the church in addition to the organ. In his many years of activity in the church, Bach composed some two hundred works for this combination of performers and instruments. These works rank among our greatest masterpieces of choral music. They are called cantatas. The word *cantata* is Italian, and means "a sung piece." A cantata lasted about thirty minutes and was performed in the middle of the Sunday service. It consisted of six or seven pieces for solo singers, the chorus, organ, and orchestra. Precisely as the minister interpreted the biblical text throughout his sermon, Bach interpreted this same text in a musical way through the cantata.

CANTATAS

The famous Mass in B Minor, Bach's most monumental choral work, is usually performed today in the concert hall. It is a



Johann Sebastian Bach

musical setting of the text of the Roman Catholic Mass, and like the cantatas, written for chorus, soloists, and orchestra. Bach was a Lutheran, not a Catholic. He composed part of this work for his sovereign, Augustus II, who was a Roman Catholic. Although based on a religious text, the Mass cannot be considered church music. Because of its great length it can not be performed in its entirety in the church as part of the service.

Among Bach's finest works are the six Brandenburg Concertos. Their name derives from their dedication to the Margrave of Brandenburg, but they were clearly written for

performance by the small orchestra that Bach directed at the court of a prince in the town of Cöthen.

When you think that Bach created music in so many forms, and achieved such perfection in all of them, it is hard to believe that in his day he was not recognized as a great composer. In fact, it was not until 1829, eighty years after his death, that his works began to be performed. It was in this year that the composer Felix Mendelssohn, then only twenty years old, conducted a first performance of one of Bach's large choral works. From that time on, the appreciation of Bach's music has grown more and more. Today Bach is recognized throughout the world as one of the greatest musical geniuses of all time.

5/ *The Symphony and Haydn*

In the days of Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) noblemen employed composers just as they did cooks and coachmen. The various members of the family as well as the household servants usually played some musical instrument, and it was generally the custom of noblemen to give many informal concerts in their palaces. And just as the cook had to prepare food for the table, so the composer had to provide music for these private concerts.

Joseph Haydn himself was employed by Prince Esterhazy, who maintained at his estate in Austria a very fine orchestra of fourteen performers. It was Haydn's duty not only to take charge of all the music for this orchestra, but also to see that the musicians appeared in white stockings and with their wigs

thoroughly powdered, and "to compose such music as His Highness shall order, divulge these new compositions to no one, and compose nothing for anybody without His Highness' knowledge and gracious permission."

He remained in the employ of the Esterhazy family for almost thirty years. During this time he composed a vast quantity of works, and achieved fame throughout most of Europe. Oxford University in England honored him with a degree of Doctor of Music. He was a kindly, generous, fatherly person, loved by almost all who knew him. Most of the musical world affectionately called him "Papa Haydn."

For his orchestra, which contained most of the instruments of our present-day orchestra, Haydn composed many works built on the same musical framework. These works are called symphonies. You may be familiar with Haydn's "Surprise Symphony" and the "Clock Symphony." These names, incidentally, were given to the symphonies by Haydn's admirers, and not by Haydn himself. They were not composed with the idea of telling a story.

SYMPHONIES

At most orchestral concerts you will hear a symphony played. One of the things you will notice about a symphony is that it is comparatively long; it usually lasts over a half hour. Another thing you will notice is that it is divided into separate sections, in most cases four. These sections are called movements. In the concert hall you can usually both see and hear that there are separate movements. You *see* that there are separate movements because at the end of each one the orchestra stops playing and the conductor drops his arms and waits before continuing with the next movement. And even with only slight experience in listening to music you will also *hear* that there are different movements. Each movement is usually a complete

MOVEMENTS

Joseph Haydn

piece in itself, and the movements of the symphony sound like four different pieces by one composer.

Haydn composed over a hundred works in a form which almost all the great composers of symphonies after him used as a framework for their symphonic works. Each composer altered the form in some way, but the general structure remained the same.

The term "symphony" is used to describe all four movements together. But each individual movement has its own form, too.

THE SONATA FORM

What is the form of the first movement of a symphony? The first movement is almost always written in a form known as the sonata form. Form in music, as we discovered in Chapter II, is the structure or design of a piece of music, that is, its framework. What we mean when we say that the first movements of most symphonies are in the sonata form is that, no matter how different they may seem, they have all been constructed around the same framework.

In the chapter on the fugue, we found out that a fugue is built up around one theme (musical idea). The sonata form is built up around at least two themes, often more, seldom less. A big advantage of working with two or more themes instead of one is the greater possibility of contrast. One theme, for example, can be vigorous and forceful, another gentle and song-like. Contrast makes music more interesting. That is one reason the sonata form has been used by so many composers.

The framework of the sonata form consists of three distinct and well-defined parts. The first and third parts are very much alike. The second, or center, section is different. Musicians have given names to these different parts of the sonata form.

EXPOSITION

The first section is called the exposition because it presents the themes on which the composer will base the whole first movement. Often the composer will ask that the entire exposition be repeated, probably in order to give the listener a chance to become more familiar with the themes.

After presenting his subject matter—that is, the musical ideas or themes on which he is building up his first movement—the composer proceeds to develop them. The second section is therefore called the development.

DEVELOPMENT

The effectiveness of the development depends entirely on the imagination and cleverness of the composer. The artistry with

which the composer uses the themes, and the dramatic interest in which he cloaks them, determines whether the music will be beautiful and moving or commonplace and dull. He may choose to work with one of the themes, or with only a part of a theme, or with all the themes. In the development the composer treats his subject matter as he pleases.

RECAPITULATION

But finally these themes come back again in their original form. The composer then reminds us what they were like before they were sent on their musical wanderings. This reminder takes the form of a repetition—often with some interesting modification—of the original themes as they were first introduced. Musicians call this third section the recapitulation. (In French the recapitulation is called the re-exposition—"re" meaning again—which is much more accurate.)

To avoid the monotony of exact repetition of the first section, composers frequently make small changes in the recapitulation. One way to vary the repetition is by changing the tone color—that is, having the themes played this time by instruments other than the ones that played it in the exposition. Another way often used is to make the connecting music between the first and second themes slightly different.

CODA

To bring the movement to an end, the composer adds a tail or conclusion. This tail end of the sonata form is called the coda, which is the Italian word for tail. Some composers make the coda short, others make it long and important.

It is often not easy while listening to music to distinguish between the different sections of the sonata form. You cannot click them off on your fingers as they are heard. It is usually only after hearing the music over and over again that the pattern begins to come clear. But knowing that there is a pattern, and perhaps eventually finding it for yourself, will make your

music listening a more meaningful and satisfying experience.

We have seen that the first movement of a symphony—a work for orchestra in four movements—is written in the sonata form, which uses as its subject several themes. The second movement in a Haydn symphony is frequently built up on one theme used over and over again in varied ways. These different ways of treating the same theme are called variations. The second movement of a symphony, when it employs this form, is called Theme and Variations.

THEME AND VARIATIONS

There are many ways of varying the theme: changing its rhythm, making it faster or slower, decorating the outline of the theme with additional notes, changing the tone color by giving the theme to different combinations of instruments, passing the tune from one instrument to another in turn. In most instances some element of the theme—its melody, harmony, or form—remains recognizable. Listening to a theme and variations can be most rewarding if you know your theme. But you should not regard variations as puzzles challenging you to find the theme. There are some instances in which the relationship of a variation to its parent theme becomes apparent only after you have heard it several times.

Many other composers besides Haydn have used the variation form, among them Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. Some composers, in fact, have taken themes of other composers and written variations for them. Brahms, for example, wrote a set of variations for orchestra based on a theme by Haydn, and also variations on a theme by Handel for piano. Rachmaninoff composed a piece for piano and orchestra which consists of many variations on a theme by Paganini. Schubert used variations of the theme of one of his own songs for one of the movements of his famous "Trout" Quintet.

Although the variation form is very frequently employed by Haydn for the second movement of his symphonies, he sometimes uses what is known as the three-part form, which was described in Chapter II.

MINUET

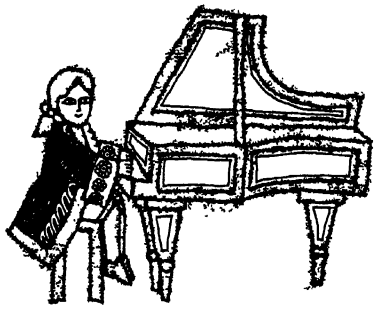
The third movement of a Haydn symphony is almost always written in a dance form of lively tempo called a minuet. The rhythm of the minuet is probably familiar to you: three beats to the measure, the first one accented. The form of the minuet is a simple one: three sections, the first and third alike, the center section (called the trio) different. The gay, fresh, sprightly quality of the minuets is part of what we mean when we say "typically Haydn." Mozart also used the minuet form for the third movements of his symphonies, and it is found, too, in some of the works of Beethoven.

After using the sonata form for the first movement of his symphonies, a theme and variations or three-part form for his second movement, and the minuet for his third movement, Haydn often returns to the sonata form for his fourth movement. A well-known English critic calls Haydn's fourth movements "kittenish," for they are almost always fast and full of fun.

STRING QUARTETS

Besides more than one hundred symphonies, Haydn also composed over seventy-five string quartets. When you have learned the form of a symphony you have really killed two birds with one stone, because the string quartet uses the same framework. It is not written to be played by a symphony orchestra, however, but by four stringed instruments—two violins, viola, and cello. Music written to be played by only a few instruments is known as chamber music, because in order to be heard to best advantage it should be performed in a room (chamber) or in a small music hall.

The concerto, which will be discussed in the next chapter, is closely related to the symphony and uses the sonata form for its first movement and often for its last. Sonatas for piano, violin, and other solo instruments, as you might guess from the name, use the sonata form, too.



6/ *The Concerto and Mozart*

CONCERTO

When a pianist or violinist or some other instrumentalist appears as soloist with an orchestra, he usually plays a concerto. A concerto may be said to be a symphony for solo instrument and orchestra. The composer of a concerto aims to make good use of the soloist's skill and mastery of his instrument, his ability to play difficult passages with ease.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–91) set the form of the concerto as it has been used by most of the other great composers who came after him. Music flowed swiftly and abundantly from the pen of this gifted eighteenth-century composer. He jotted down his musical thoughts as easily as if he were writing a letter; so that though his life was a short one, he has

left us over six hundred works of all kinds—symphonies, concertos, operas, chamber music, and choral music. But it was in the concerto that Mozart made one of his more important contributions to orchestral music.

It is no wonder that Mozart excelled in writing music in a form frankly designed for employing the skill of the soloist. For even as a young child he had been one of the most brilliant pianists of his day.

Do you remember yourself at six? You were probably just about able to print C-A-T and D-O-G. And if you were a very smart child, you could pick out, on the piano with one finger, the tunes of "Hot Cross Buns" and "Three Blind Mice." Mozart at the age of six was giving concerts at the Austrian court in Vienna. At seven, he was playing not only other composers' music, but his own compositions as well.

This child genius also played the violin, but apparently did not practice on it enough to satisfy his father's ambitions. Once, when he was about twenty-one years old, his father Leopold, in real parent fashion, wrote him, "You probably did not practice on your violin at all while you were in Munich; I should be very sorry if that were the case." And in another letter he wrote, "The violin is hanging up on its nail, I suppose."

Mozart was born in Salzburg, a city set like a jewel in the midst of the snow-capped Austrian Alps. He never went to school and had no teacher other than his father, a splendid musician himself, who realized that his young son had extraordinary talent. With the hope that this talent would ensure his son a well-paying job when he was older, the father decided to make the name of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart famous throughout Europe. This he did.

For several years the Mozarts—father, son, and daughter,

The child Mozart performing with his sister and his father

Marianne, an excellent harpsichord player—rolled over the bumpy roads of Europe in a closed coach, stopping off at the major cities and courts to give performances and to meet other musicians of the day. There were plenty of excellent musicians, to be sure, and few people would come to hear just another good performer of no reputation. But to hear a young child who

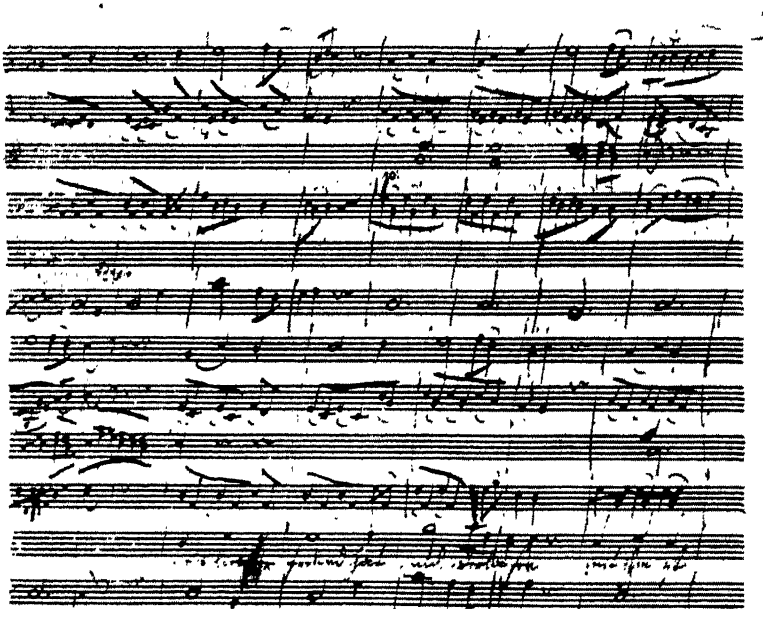
not only performed with amazing skill but also composed his own music, that was indeed something new and sensational. Crowds came to see what it was hard to believe, that a child whose feet did not even reach the floor could sit down at the piano and improvise—that is, make up music on the spur of the moment. Wherever the wonderchild appeared—in England, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, as well as his native Austria—he was cheered and applauded. Little Wolfgang was the darling of the salons of the nobility.

The sparkle and gaiety of court life, the grace and good manners, the humor and charm, the absence of anything harsh or ugly—all this is revealed in much of Mozart's music. But there is far more to Mozart's musical genius than mere sparkle and gaiety. His music frequently reflects a great depth of emotion, of sadness at times, of passion and strength.

Although all the other countries of Europe applauded and honored Mozart, his home town offered him a position as a musical servant of the church, doing odd jobs, that paid him an insultingly small wage. Even Vienna, the capital of his native Austria, where he spent the last ten years of his all-too-short life, showed little appreciation for one of the greatest musical geniuses that Austria, or the world, has ever produced. He was forced to eke out a humble living for himself and his family by giving music lessons and writing dance music to order for performance at court balls, and by giving concerts at which he appeared as soloist in his own concertos. Although his operas were quite successful, they brought him little money. So hard did he have to work, because the talents enthusiastically honored in childhood were no longer properly recognized and rewarded in manhood, that Mozart suffered a complete physical collapse. He died at the pathetically early age of thirty-five.

Before the time of Mozart, orchestral music was performed principally in the church or at the palaces of the nobility. It was during his lifetime that the custom was started of renting a small hall and selling tickets for a concert of music. A pianist who might appear at one of these concerts was expected to be not only a highly skilled player but a composer too. He was supposed to write at least one new work for each concert, and in addition to compose some on the spur of the moment.

Mozart, in his later years, composed a new concerto for each concert he gave. These concertos rank among his finest works. They are filled with lovely melodies, yet through them there often runs an undercurrent of sadness. The polish, the perfect proportion, the inventiveness typical of Mozart's music, are all found in the piano concertos. He composed over thirty-five concertos—twenty-three for the piano, five for the violin,

A page from Mozart's manuscript score for his opera Bastien und Bastienne, *written when he was twelve*

and others for various wind instruments: flute, horn, bassoon.

The concerto, as perfected by Mozart, is really a symphony for a solo instrument and orchestra. But it has only three movements instead of four. In the concerto as in the symphony, the first movement is in the sonata form. The second is a slow movement. The last movement is again often in the sonata form, and is usually in a lively tempo. The third, or minuet movement, is usually absent in the concerto.

Always introduced in the first movement of a Mozart concerto, and sometimes in the second and last movement as well, is a brilliant and intricate passage for the solo instrument without accompaniment. This passage is called a cadenza, and is a musical insert, put in to give the performer a chance to display his technical ability as instrumentalist and improviser. Mozart merely indicated a pause near the end of the first movement where the cadenza was to be played. He then improvised the cadenza right at the concert.

CADENZA

Up to the time of Beethoven it continued to be the custom for the performer to improvise or compose his own cadenza. Beethoven, who lived from 1770 to 1827, created six great concertos—five for piano and one for violin. In his famous Emperor Concerto, at the place in the first movement where the cadenza usually appeared, he wrote, "Do not play a cadenza, but go on at once to the following." There followed a short solo passage which was completely written out and was a part of the composition. After Beethoven's day, the only important composer who permitted the performer to do what he wanted with the cadenza was Brahms. Modern performers no longer improvise their own cadenzas. When they present a concerto that originally called for improvisation, they play a cadenza that has already been composed and learn it beforehand.

Mozart composed in almost all musical forms, and made outstanding contributions to the world of music as a composer of orchestral music, chamber music, choral music, and opera. Besides thirty-five or more concertos, he produced forty-nine symphonies, sixty-eight sacred works (music for the church), enormous quantities of chamber music, numerous works for piano (clavier), and twenty-two operas. All this within a life span of only thirty-five years!

7/ *Beethoven and the Symphony*

Can you imagine writing some of the greatest music the world has even known and being unable to hear much of it? This was the case with one of the most inspired musical geniuses of all time—Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827). When still a young man he started to lose his hearing. During the last years of his life, when his grandest works were composed, he was stone-deaf. At the first performance of his last and greatest symphony, the Ninth, Beethoven, whose back was to the audience, had to be turned around so that he might *see* the applause, for he could not *hear* it.

Beethoven was born in Bonn, Germany, a town situated on the river Rhine. He was named after his grandfather, Ludwig van Beethoven, an able musician. Young Ludwig inherited not only the name of his grandfather, but also his musical talent. Beethoven's father, also a musician, earned his living, though a meager one, by singing in the town chapel and by giving music lessons.

The boyhood of young Ludwig was not a happy one. His father, a ne'er-do-well and a drunkard, treated him harshly. Poor Ludwig was forced to practice piano day and night with no time to go to school or to play or to make friends like other boys of his age. The father recognized his son's talent and selfishly used it for what money he could make out of it. And the talented young Beethoven grew to be a musical genius, a far greater one even than his father had foreseen.

Except as a very young man, Beethoven refused to be employed by the rich nobility as was Haydn, nor was he an underpaid servant of the church as was Mozart. He took orders from nobody. He was master of himself. He wrote music when he felt inspired to create it, and he wrote the kind of music he wanted to write.

He gave piano lessons to several members of noble families, received money from them, and enjoyed their hospitality. But he remained completely independent. He came and went as he chose and often repaid his patrons' kindness and interest in him with rudeness and insults. Fifty of Beethoven's compositions, to be sure, are dedicated to these music lovers who befriended him. These dedications, however, were the only thanks they received. But so great was Beethoven's musical genius that he was sought after and admired despite his uncouthness and frequently boorish behavior.

Because of his deafness, his exceedingly unattractive appearance, his poverty, his need for affection, his lack of education, Beethoven was often a bitter man. He realized his own greatness, but felt alone in the world. The only outlet for his feelings was in his music. He poured all his loneliness, all his inner joys and sorrows, all his reactions and thoughts about man and nature, into his compositions.

As is the case with so many lonely people, Beethoven loved to wander off by himself in the country. He would walk out across the fields and through the woods with his notebook in his hand and jot down his musical ideas as they came to him.

Beethoven did not compose easily. He worked over every measure until it seemed right to him. He changed and corrected and rewrote untiringly. We know this to be true, for many of the notebooks in which he worked remain for us to see. It was not only inspiration, but long hours of grueling effort, often years of hard work, that molded his rich musical thoughts into masterpieces.

Beethoven's music is much more than pleasant entertainment. One of its chief characteristics is an exuberant energy, a tempestuous drive. Beethoven's music embraces the universe. His striving is not for personal triumphs but for the brotherhood of all mankind. His cries of anguish are not for himself alone but for all suffering humanity. Even his humor is of a rather robust nature; gigantic jokes rather than gay or witty pleasantries. And Beethoven's love of nature expresses the joy and peace and beauty that man has felt through the ages when he wanders into the woods or rests beneath a tree by the side of a stream. Thus his music often possesses a tender, lyrical quality as well.

The sonata form is the mold into which Beethoven cast

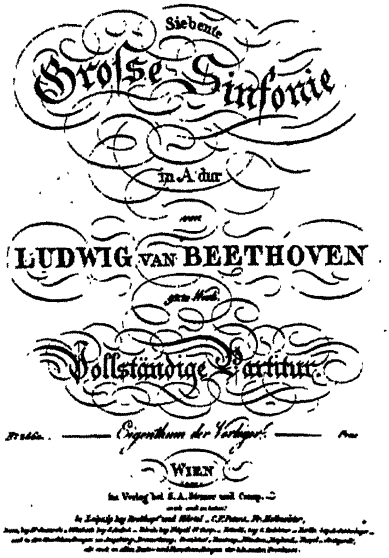
much of his instrumental music—all the first movements and often the last movements, too, of his nine symphonies, his sixteen string quartets, his six concertos, and his thirty-two piano sonatas. And almost all of this large bulk of music is performed frequently today. His nine symphonies are heard over and over again in the concert hall, yet their power and beauty continue to stir and enthrall us.

Beethoven's symphonies (with the exception of the Sixth) have the usual four movements. But although they are separate, the four movements are closely related to one another. Together they make a complete whole, rather than four disconnected pieces as was often the case with Haydn's symphonies. Beethoven named two of his symphonies. The Third he called "Heroic Symphony [Eroica] composed to celebrate the memory of a great man." In this symphony all four movements express Beethoven's many thoughts about heroic things. The four movements are connected by this idea.

Another symphony, the Sixth, Beethoven called "Pastoral," which means it is about the country. The four movements are sprinkled with titles such as "Awakening of Joyous Feelings on Arriving in the Country," "Scene by the Brook," "Joyful Gathering of the Country Folk." Here again the four movements are connected by a single idea.

The Ninth Symphony Beethoven based on the "Ode to Joy," by the German poet Schiller. Themes from the first three movements are recalled in the fourth movement. In fact, even in the other six symphonies where Beethoven has not given us his intentions in words, we sense very strongly that there is an underlying musical idea running through each of these symphonies, too.

No one of Beethoven's symphonies is like another. Each is a



Title page of the first edition of the score of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony

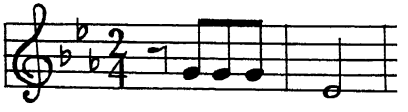
unique art work. In fact, one of the chief things you will notice about Beethoven's work is its endless variety. Beethoven found in the sonata form, with its possibilities of dramatically contrasting themes, one of the best ways to express his musical thoughts. But in using the sonata form, he changed it quite a bit.

When a composer changes a form, he does not say to himself, "This form needs changes. I am going to improve it by adding a bit here and altering this and that there." The changes come about through the sweeping needs of his musical thoughts, like swollen rivers overflowing their banks.

One of the important changes Beethoven made in the sonata

form was to expand it. His Third Symphony, the "Eroica," for example, is more than twice as long as any symphony by Haydn.

In the first movement of a Beethoven symphony, the development section is not only expanded but sometimes even introduces new themes. The recapitulation section becomes more than just a repetition. It is led up to by the development section and forms an exciting climax to the development, all the more exciting because we recognize the return of familiar themes. Sometimes the themes of the exposition appear in the recapitulation in a louder, more triumphant way, and with a more brilliant use of the instruments. The coda, instead of being a mere tail, becomes an important section in itself, often almost like a second development. All this may be quite difficult to comprehend in words, but is readily perceived when listening to the music. Just play the first movements of a Haydn symphony and a Beethoven symphony one after the other.

You might suppose that lengthening the movement simply meant that Beethoven rambled on and on. Just the opposite is true. Beethoven composed in a direct, always logical style. Every note he wrote was necessary for his musical thinking, so necessary that you could not cut even a few measures from his symphonies without weakening them. Yet often an entire movement is based on one theme, so economical was he with his musical material. In the familiar Fifth Symphony the whole first movement is dominated by a four-note motive that you probably know:

This sort of knocking motive is found often in Beethoven's music.

Beethoven also left his mark on the third movement of the symphony. Although he continued to use the dance-like form and rhythm used by Haydn and Mozart, he changed the tempo—to full speed ahead. He often abandoned the pleasant title Minuet, and in its place he put Scherzo. The word *scherzo* is Italian for "joke." But Beethoven's scherzos are far from light, humorous pieces. They are enormous jokes, rip-roaring movements of great vigor with startling contrasts and explosive outbursts where you least expect them. These scherzos are masterpieces of humor in music. (Often Beethoven wrote only the tempo indications as the title of his third movements—*Presto*, *Allegro*, *Vivace*. But they are always known as scherzos.)

SCHERZO

Besides expanding the sonata form, bringing the four movements of the symphony into a meaningful whole, and developing the scherzo, Beethoven in his nine symphonies used many of the instruments of the orchestra in bold new ways. He did not do this for the sake of being new and different, but because his musical thoughts needed these novel ways to further expression. The double basses, for example, are raised from the role of mere accompaniment and given the important job of announcing themes; the horns are assigned important duties; and even the kettledrums are used to give forth themes. In the triumphant last movement of the Ninth Symphony, Beethoven introduces an entirely new "orchestral instrument"—the human voice. Soloists and chorus sing words from Schiller's "Ode to Joy."

Many composers after Beethoven have added to the world's store of symphonies. Franz Schubert, the German song composer whom you will read about in a later chapter, also wrote

nine symphonies. His C Major Symphony and the Unfinished Symphony are among his great works heard often today. Other outstanding composers whose symphonies appear frequently on our concert programs are the French Hector Berlioz (1803–69), the German Robert Schumann (1810–56), the Belgian César Franck (1822–90), the Russian Peter Ilich Tchaikovsky (1840–93), the German Johannes Brahms (1833–97), the Viennese Gustav Mahler (1860–1911), and the Finnish Jean Sibelius (1865–1957).

The four symphonies of Brahms, third of the three great *B*'s of music, are usually classed with those of Beethoven. Although Brahms did not write his first symphony until almost fifty years after Beethoven's death, his use of the sonata form belongs much more to the period of Beethoven than to his own. Brahms is considered a master of the art of development. His themes have a songlike quality of rare beauty and his rhythms are original and effective. In his writing for orchestra he did not use the many new ways for achieving varied tone colors that had been developed by composers of his day such as Wagner. Hence his orchestral writing tends to be solid rather than brilliant. The Brahms symphonies are probably played as often as the Beethoven symphonies, and as with them, constant repetition does not dim their power to move us.

Gustav Mahler was the last great symphonist of the tradition established by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven.

Many composers from the time of Haydn to the present have tried their hand at writing a symphony. For while there are many different forms of orchestral writing, the symphony remains unquestionably one of the most important forms of all.

8/ *The Overture*

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, operatic composers wrote short instrumental pieces to be played before the curtain went up for their operas. These opening pieces French composers called *ouvertures*. *Ouverture* is the French word meaning "opening," and it is from this word that our "overture" derives.

THE OVERTURE

The overture of those earlier days usually had no particular connection with the opera that followed. It merely served to quiet the audience. It warned the late-comers to hurry to their seats. It gently reminded gossipers to bring their chatter to an end, as the curtain was about to go up and the opera commence. A humble beginning, to be sure, yet over the course of years

the overture became more and more important in itself. Composers began to describe the character or mood of the opera that followed. Then their listeners began to expect more from this music than mere musical entertainment designed to quiet the audience and prepare them for the rise of the curtain.

In those early days one could never hear operatic overtures played anywhere but in the opera house. Today, however, their musical value has been recognized, and we hear them played in the concert hall as separate musical compositions, without the operas for which they were written.

You will probably get a clearer picture of the overture if you know how it has been used by different composers.

"Some of the early overtures," one critic remarked, "were like locomotives that could be hitched to any dramatic train of cars." This did not keep them from being good music, of course, but it showed that they had no real connection with the operas with which they were played. One of the best-known overtures of this type is Rossini's celebrated overture to his opera *The Barber of Seville*. The action of this opera takes place in Spain, but the overture was originally written to come before another opera by Rossini about a Roman emperor in the Syrian desert. When this work failed, Rossini used the same overture for another opera, in this case about Queen Elizabeth of England. Finally he attached it to *The Barber of Seville*, where it has remained ever since.

Composers like Beethoven and von Weber wrote another type of operatic overture. They believed that an overture should be a summary or synopsis of the opera or play which followed. The result was that their overtures are almost miniature dramas in themselves, summaries in music of the opera that follows. In this way, the audience really experiences the play

or opera twice—once in the overture as a musical synopsis of what is to follow, and again during the actual performance of the opera or play.

We may call overtures of this kind "synoptic," which simply means that they give us a synopsis of the work which they introduce. We could hardly find a better example of this type of overture than the one that Beethoven wrote as part of the music he was asked to supply for Goethe's historical tragedy *Egmont*. In this overture we experience much more than a bare synopsis of the play, for Beethoven's music has the unique quality of being able to express a tremendous amount in a short space of time.

Beethoven condenses in music the plot of the play that Goethe has written in words. In music, of course, characters and feelings and situations can only be suggested. Yet Beethoven's music is so vivid and colorful that if you are familiar with the story before you hear the music, it requires little imagination to know just what is happening.

One of the world's greatest writers of operas, Richard Wagner, whom we will talk about at greater length in the chapter on opera, was not only a composer and poet but also an author. Among his writings he has left us an interesting essay on the overture. Although in this essay he seemed to have definite ideas on what an overture should be, Wagner apparently found it difficult to carry them out in his music, since several different types of overtures were used by him.

In his early operas, *The Flying Dutchman* and *Tannhäuser*, Wagner labels his introductory music Overture, and these overtures, like Beethoven's, are summaries of the entire opera that follows.

For all his other operas, Wagner changed the label Overture

to Prelude [*Vorspiel*]. In the four *Ring of the Nibelung* operas these preludes are not introductions to the whole opera but merely to the first scene. In the preludes to his *Lohengrin*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and *Parsifal*, Wagner conveys in music the underlying dramatic concept of the entire opera.

Wagner's overtures and preludes are such splendid musical works that we have come to regard them as concert pieces apart from the operas, and they are now among our more frequently performed orchestral works.

Still another type of overture is really no overture at all. It is called a concert overture, and has no connection whatsoever with any play or opera. When you hear a concert overture, you may consider it to be merely a single movement for symphony orchestra having some descriptive purpose. This purpose is told to you by the title of the overture, such as Mendelssohn's *Fingal's Cave*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *Russian Easter*, Tchaikovsky's *1812*, Brahms's *Academic Festival*, and so forth.

Modern opera composers have to a large extent done away with the overture. While, to be sure, they introduce their operas with some music, whatever is played is usually short in duration and could not possibly be separated from the whole work and be played as a selection in the concert hall.

9/ The Song and Schubert

The human voice is really a musical instrument, and it is most likely that the earliest type of musical expression was singing. Probably the very first kind of music which you yourself made was with your voice—that is, you sang a song.

People have always felt the need to express their feelings in a musical way, to use their voices for something beyond mere speech. They sing songs at their work and at their play, for their dancing and for their celebrating. Youths sing of love. Many of the songs that grew out of people's need to express themselves musically have passed down from generation to generation, and are still being sung and played today. These are called folk songs. No doubt you know and sing many of them

yourself, songs like "Au Clair de la Lune," "Auld Lang Syne," "The Erie Canal," "She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain" and the like. Christmas carols, spirituals, and cowboy songs are folk songs, too.

Folk songs reflect the many different moods of people in all walks of life: the boisterous sea chanteys of the sailor at sea; songs, sometimes happy, sometimes grumbling, of people at work; the poignant laments of the disappointed lover and the joyous outpourings of the happy one; the gay ditties of men and women and children at play; the lusty songs of railroaders; the mournful chants of men alone on the vast prairie.

Every country has produced its own folk songs; but these songs were not written down generally nor do we know who composed them. They have come to us merely by being sung or played down through the years. Although at times some instrument may have been played as a background to the songs, no accompaniment was composed to go with them. In other words, folk songs, with their pure melodies, are simply poems and stories to be sung rather than recited.

THE ART SONG

There is another type of song called the art song. In this kind of song the composer chooses a poem—or occasionally some piece of prose—and sets it to music. This music is composed for voice and for some accompanying instrument, most often the piano. Of course in the case of the art song we usually know who the composer is, because he writes down his melodies and instrumental accompaniments just as he would record any other musical works he created.

Many composers have written songs. But the art of song writing reached a new height with one of the most gifted of all song writers—Franz Schubert.

Schubert (1797–1828), the son of a schoolmaster, was born

in a suburb of Vienna. His first lessons in music came from his own family; his father taught him violin, and an older brother taught him piano. But so exceptional was the boy's natural musical ability that he soon knew more than they did. Schubert's father sent him to the choirmaster of the parish for more professional instruction. From the choirmaster he received lessons in singing as well as piano and violin. And this man, too, was constantly astonished by the genius of his young pupil. Here was a boy not yet eleven years of age singing first soprano in the local choir, playing whatever violin solos occurred in the service, and using his spare time at home to compose little songs and pieces.

Because of his marked musical talent, he was sent to a school that trained boys to sing in the court chapel, and provided their general schooling as well. Here, in his gold-laced uniform, Schubert played violin in the school orchestra. Although younger than most of the boys, he was soon playing first violin and even taking the place of the regular conductor when he was absent.

Most of us who are studying a musical instrument have to be urged and reminded to practice. But not Schubert. He was so entranced and excited by music that he neglected his school studies to further himself musically. He was constantly composing—indeed, he could not even get enough paper to write down all the musical ideas that flooded his brain. All through his life this was true of Schubert; he could scarcely write quickly enough or find enough paper to keep up with all the music within him.

In spite of his passion for music and his remarkable talent for it, Schubert's father urged him to take up the career of school teaching rather than that of music. He taught for three

years at his father's school, a dull and routine job for one who had such a burning need to compose music. But—and perhaps this is an important difference between geniuses and ordinary human beings—during this time Schubert composed an astonishing amount of music of all kinds. Some of the world's greatest songs are among these compositions, several of them written when he was only seventeen and still a student.

One of the amazing qualities of Schubert's genius was the extraordinary speed and complete lack of effort with which he composed. In the case of his songs, this did not lead to slipshod and careless results, as might be imagined. On the contrary, it gave to these creations a flowing, spontaneous simplicity. At the same time he had the inspired faculty of expressing in music the deeper meanings and varying emotions and moods of the poems to which he set his music. Schubert set to music poems of some of the greatest poets of all time—poets such as Shakespeare, Goethe, and Heine, to name a few.

When you listen to a Schubert song, probably the first thing that will strike you is the beauty of its melody, for Schubert's brain produced an abundance of beautiful melodies. These melodies are so admirably suited to the text of the poem that a famous writer on music described it this way: "Schubert read the poem, and the appropriate tune, married to immortal verse (a marriage, in his case, truly made in Heaven), rushed into his mind, and to the end of his pen."

Schubert's genius, however, was not limited to the creation of melodious and appropriate tunes. One of his greatest contributions was the elevation of the piano accompaniment to a position of great importance. In his songs this accompaniment often depicts the mood or atmosphere of the poem. Or it describes with remarkable effectiveness persons, objects in the poem,

sounds of nature. Some Schubert songs have often been called miniature dramas, because of the revealing musical settings he has given their texts.

In his song "Gretchen at the Spinning-Wheel," for example, the humming of a spinning wheel is heard throughout the song in the rolling-note piano accompaniment. In "The Post," one hears in the introduction the galloping horses and the horn of the mail coach. In the highly dramatic "The Erl King," the poem first tells of a father clutching his sick child in his arms, wildly riding through a stormy night. In the furious piano accompaniment at this part one can hear the galloping of the horse through the black night. Although the song is meant to be sung by only one person, Schubert gives each one of the characters—the father, the child, and the Erl King (an imaginary figure)—a completely different kind of personality. You hear the worried father trying to comfort his child, the wheedling voice of the Erl King who is attempting to entice the child to his realm, and the fright and ever-growing terror of the child. The poem ends with the simple words, "In his arms the child was dead."

Songs, in general, can be divided into three types. One type is a song in which all the stanzas of the poem have the same musical setting—that is, the same music is repeated for each stanza. In the second type, all of the verses have the same musical setting except for one or two in which the meaning of the poem seems to demand a different treatment. The third type has no set pattern at all. Here the composer has tremendous opportunities for creating music which expresses the changing feelings and meanings of the poem. Schubert was equally successful in all three kinds of songs.

Unfortunately, Schubert did not receive the recognition he

Schubert as accompanist in a performance of his songs

deserved during his lifetime. He had an extremely difficult time getting his works published, and when he did succeed in having them published, was paid heartbreakingly little for them. Part of his failure in this direction was probably due to his own personality. A sweet, lovable man, modest and self-effacing, he was not able to push himself forward or to demand even what was his due. A devoted group of friends and admirers—artists, musicians, and writers whom he used to meet in the coffee-houses of Vienna—helped to bring to Schubert the little recognition that he did receive.

And yet, in spite of extreme poverty and lack of wide appreciation, he was constantly composing. His well of musical inspiration never seemed to be dry. As he explained once to

a visitor, "When I have finished one piece I begin the next." In the course of his tragically short life—Schubert died when he was thirty-one years old—he composed over 1100 works. Among these were nine symphonies, fifteen string quartets and other instrumental pieces, several operas, a great quantity of piano music, and over six hundred songs.

Schubert's beautiful melodies, his intense feeling for poetry, his unusual sense of the dramatic, his understanding of the various possibilities of the human voice, his tremendous creativeness, the naturalness and simplicity, the depth and tenderness of his music—all these combined to make him one of the world's greatest composers of songs.

Other well-known composers of songs appearing frequently on song recital programs include Schumann, Brahms, Richard Strauss, Hugo Wolf, and Claude Debussy. Since these composers are European—German and French—the poems they have used are either written in, or translated into, *their* language. Even those poems of Shakespeare which they used were translated first, and then made into songs. Naturally, the fullest appreciation and enjoyment of these great works is for those who are fortunate enough to understand the language the composer used in fashioning his songs.

10/ Piano Music (Nineteenth Century)

Have you a softloud in your home? Never heard of it, you will probably answer. Translate softloud into Italian and you get *pianoforte*. That is the name given to the keyboard instrument, invented in Italy in the early eighteenth century, that we call for short—piano.

If you lift up the top of a piano and look in, you will see many metal strings. Press down any one of the keys on the keyboard and you will discover that sounds are made by felt-covered hammers striking the strings. The keys, both black and white, act as levers. When these levers are pushed down they make the hammers strike the strings.

The piano has eighty-eight keys. Thus it offers the player a much greater pitch range than an instrument of only four strings, like the violin or cello. Besides, many notes can be played at the same time. For this reason the piano can be made to sound more like a whole orchestra than can any other single instrument played by a single player, with the exception of the organ. Then, too, the piano can be played more naturally and comfortably than other instruments. For these reasons it holds first place in our homes and is a most popular instrument for solo performance on the concert stage.

Many important composers, from Haydn to the moderns, have written great music for the piano. There is also much music composed before the piano was invented that we can play as piano music today. Before the time of Haydn and Mozart, composers such as Couperin, Scarlatti, and Bach wrote copiously for the keyboard instruments of their day, the clavichord and harpsichord. Yet most of their music is readily transferable to the modern piano. The *Inventions* and *The Well-Tempered Clavier* of Bach, for instance, are familiar to almost every pianist.

Haydn, Mozart, and especially Beethoven, about whose orchestral music you have read, also enriched the piano literature. Their more important piano works are molded into the large forms like those used for their orchestral music. Some are in variation form, but for the most part they are sonatas.

SONATAS

Piano sonatas, like symphonies and concertos, are written in separate movements. The sonatas of Haydn and Mozart usually have three movements—a slow middle movement between two contrasting movements in a faster tempo. Beethoven sometimes inserted a scherzo before the last movement. As in the symphony, the first movement of these sonatas, and often other movements, too, uses the sonata form.

It was Beethoven, in his thirty-two sonatas, who brought the form to its high point of artistic achievement. Other composers after him also used the form, but while several of their sonatas were significant works, they did not reach the heights of those of Beethoven at his best.

During the nineteenth century a large number of new types of piano music arose to challenge the sovereignty of the sonata, so many that the nineteenth century may be called the golden age of piano music. Composers broke loose from what they considered the confining mold of the sonata form and turned to shorter, more freely constructed pieces. Passing dreams, momentary longings, "snapshots" of people and things are described in their music. They consciously tried to do with music what poets did with words and regarded themselves as "musical poets." The style of most of these pieces is free and fanciful. Sometimes they used titles to help convey in words what they were trying to say in their music. Such titles as Schumann's *Scenes from Childhood* or Liszt's *Years of Pilgrimage* are typical. Schumann, who was one of the leading musicians of this period, summed up these new ideas neatly. It was not a question of figures and forms, he said, but of whether or not the composer was a poet.

Another favorite type of piano music in the nineteenth century was based on the folk music of the various countries: Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies, Chopin's Polish dances (the lively peasant mazurkas and stately court dances like the polonaises), and Brahms's Hungarian Dances for piano duet.

It is quite usual today for a musician to present a piano recital —that is, a concert given by a single performer on the piano. But it was the Hungarian composer Franz Liszt (1811–86), probably one of the greatest pianists the world has ever known,

Franz Liszt as a young man

who actually originated the piano recital. The public flocked to hear this brilliant, handsome virtuoso whose playing was as sensational to watch as it was stirring to hear. He was the first musician who could fill a large concert hall without the assistance of an orchestra to accompany him in a concerto.

Mozart and Beethoven, of course, could also dazzle audiences with their virtuoso piano playing, but when they performed in a large hall they played concertos with orchestra. On the occasions when they played alone it was before small private audiences at the homes of the upper nobility and the wealthy.

To be sure, the piano played by Liszt had undergone considerable mechanical improvement over the piano of Mozart's

Liszt playing for friends in Paris

and Beethoven's day. It had more strings, the key mechanism worked faster, the sound itself came forth with more brilliancy, and it offered more variety of tone color. But Liszt also devised many new techniques in piano playing that made the instrument more full-sounding and brilliant. He sat on a higher chair so that his arms could swing freely from one end of the keyboard to the other and could come down with greater force. In his own compositions he introduced complicated hand crossings, sensational leaps from the highest notes to the lowest and back again, and rich musical effects that continually utilized every finger on both hands.

Liszt composed many works in almost every field. Some

musicians raise their eyebrows at his music, however. They claim that it was obviously written for its sensational effect on his audience. That may be, but the fact remains that much of Liszt's music is most enjoyable and exciting to hear.

TRANSCRIPTIONS

Among Liszt's contributions to music are his transcriptions. A transcription is the arrangement of music written for one instrument or combination of instruments so that it can be played by a different instrument or different combinations of instruments. "Transcription" was Liszt's own term for a *free* arrangement of a pre-existent work. You may be familiar with his often-played *La Campanella* [The Little Bell], a transcription for piano of a movement of a violin concerto by Paganini.

Liszt arranged Bach organ works, Schubert songs, operatic selections, Beethoven's symphonies, the overture to Wagner's *Tannhäuser,* and much other music, to be played on the piano. He truly made the piano "symphonic."

The dramatic figure of Liszt blazes over the whole nineteenth century. But equally important on the scene, though not so colorful, was the quiet, modest German composer, Robert Schumann. Schumann's music is heard regularly today. Especially charming are his pieces written for children, *Scenes from Childhood,* in which he depicts familiar happenings in a child's life and characters from German fairy tales. Among the popular collections of shorter pieces by Schumann are *Papillons* [Butterflies], *Noveletten* [Romantic Tales], *Fantasiestücke* [Fantasy Pieces]. Perhaps the most frequently performed of all Schumann's piano works is *Carnaval,* which he describes as "little scenes composed for the piano, based on four notes."

This series of sketches—*Carnaval*—is in the form of a theme (based on the four notes) and variations, and describes a mas-

querade ball. The four notes represent the name of the town Asch, from which a former love of Schumann's had come. In the German language these letters stand for four musical tones:

A = A
S = E-flat
C = C
H = B-natural

Schumann not only uses this combination of the four letters, but also this one:

As = A-flat
C = C
H = B-natural

The names of some of the pieces in this work describe occurrences or situations at the masked ball: *Reconnaissance* [Recognition], *Aveu* [An Avowal of Love], *Promenade* [A Stroll]. Some are named for characters at the ball: *Pierrot*, *Arlequin*, *Pantalon et Columbine*, and some for real people: *Chiarina* represents the Clara Wieck whom Schumann later married; *Chopin* describes this composer by employing the style of one of his nocturnes. Liszt gave part of this work its first performance.

Schumann also gained fame as a music critic. He edited a musical journal in Leipzig, and through his writings helped many fellow composers to get the recognition due them. He befriended Chopin, and extended a helping hand to the young Brahms.

The Polish composer Frédéric Chopin (1810–49), unlike other great composers, wrote almost solely for the piano. Like Schumann, he turned to simple, short forms that allowed his imagination free play. Chopin extended the tone-color possibilities of the piano and developed a new style of accompani-

ment for the left hand. The style of his music is elegant, intense, and often dramatic. His large output of piano works, all fanciful and imaginative short pieces—etudes, preludes, nocturnes, ballades, impromptus, waltzes, and so on—are widely played and enjoyed in the home and in the concert hall today.

Johannes Brahms, whom we discussed in the chapter on the symphony, was still another outstanding contributor to the piano music of the nineteenth century. The help and friendship that Schumann gave to Brahms was continued by Schumann's wife Clara after his death. It was Clara Schumann, a pianist herself, who introduced many of Brahms's piano works. The young Brahms in one year composed three dramatic, vigorous piano sonatas. But as he grew older he tended to write in the smaller forms, in somber tone colors rather than brilliant ones, and in a pensive, melancholy mood. These shorter piano works bear titles such as *Ballade*, *Rhapsody*, *Capriccio*, *Intermezzo*. Among Brahms's most popular piano pieces are those in dance form—sixteen waltzes and the four sets of Hungarian Dances for piano duet. Like Liszt and Chopin, Brahms was interested in folk music and much of his music has a folk-song quality.

Another piano piece of Brahms that is frequently heard is the *Variations on a Theme by Paganini.* This is a set of twenty-eight variations on a tune that has also been treated by quite a number of other distinguished composers, among them Schumann, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff. Brahms's variations were originally designed to be studies for the piano and are so tremendously difficult that Clara Schumann dubbed them *Hexenvariationen* [Witches' Variations].

Twentieth-century composers in most instances made a complete break with the past. It is as if they speak an entirely

Robert and Clara Schumann

new musical language. Some modern composers who have made important contributions to piano music are the French composers Debussy and Ravel, the Russian Prokofiev, the Austrian Schoenberg, the Hungarian Bartók, the American Samuel Barber.

11 / The Opera

If you believe in supernatural or fanciful tales while you are reading them even if you know they cannot be true; if you like tales of knights in shining armor even though they could not possibly be real; if you enjoy flying away from everyday life aboard a magic carpet, then you are probably the kind of person who will enjoy opera. For opera is not realistic; it is not like everyday life. An opera is a play whose characters sing rather than speak, and their singing is accompanied by an orchestra.

In everyday life two people do not customarily talk at once for a considerable length of time. But in opera two people frequently sing the same or even different words at the same

time—that is, they sing a duet. Even four or five or six characters may sing together; this is known as ensemble singing. (*Ensemble* is the French word for "together.") In opera large groups of people often sing in unison. They are the chorus. Huntsmen, fishermen, flower girls, townspeople, soldiers sing explanations of the action on the stage or comment upon it, or form an audience to which the leading characters can tell their life stories, their troubles, their forebodings, or their plans.

THE ARIA

There is also a solo song, called an aria (from the Italian word meaning "tune" or "melody"), that is really just a musical interruption to give a leading singer the chance to express his or her feelings or emotions.

Real life is definitely not like this. To get the fullest enjoyment from opera you should not compare it to real life.

THE LIBRETTO

An opera is made up of two elements: the libretto, which is a play or story, written in poetry or prose and the music that has been composed to intensify it. With the exception of a few composers, notably Richard Wagner, almost every opera composer has used a libretto written by someone else. Without the libretto the music would not have been composed, for the ideas, the characters, and the plot of the libretto are what brought forth the kind of music the composer wrote. Thus the libretto and the music must be taken together, and the music understood through the words of the libretto. Words have not been added to music, but music to words. It is important for the understanding of opera to keep this in mind.

But, you will ask, how can one understand what an opera is all about when the words are usually sung in a foreign language —Italian, French, German, Russian? And even on the rare occasions when an opera is sung in English it is hard to catch the words because of the musical accompaniment. There is

only one way to understand what an opera is all about: Read the libretto or story of the opera before you hear it. There are word-for-word English translations of almost all the operas you hear today, and short synopses in English may be found in various books on the opera.

This may sound like a lot of work, but it is worth the effort. If you have ever heard an opera without knowing the story, and then hear it again after you do know it, you will find that your tremendously increased enjoyment amply rewards your efforts. When you hear an opera over the radio or on television or on phonograph records (and for many of us this is the only way we do hear opera), it is a good idea to sit with your libretto in your hand and follow the words as they are sung.

THE REPERTORY

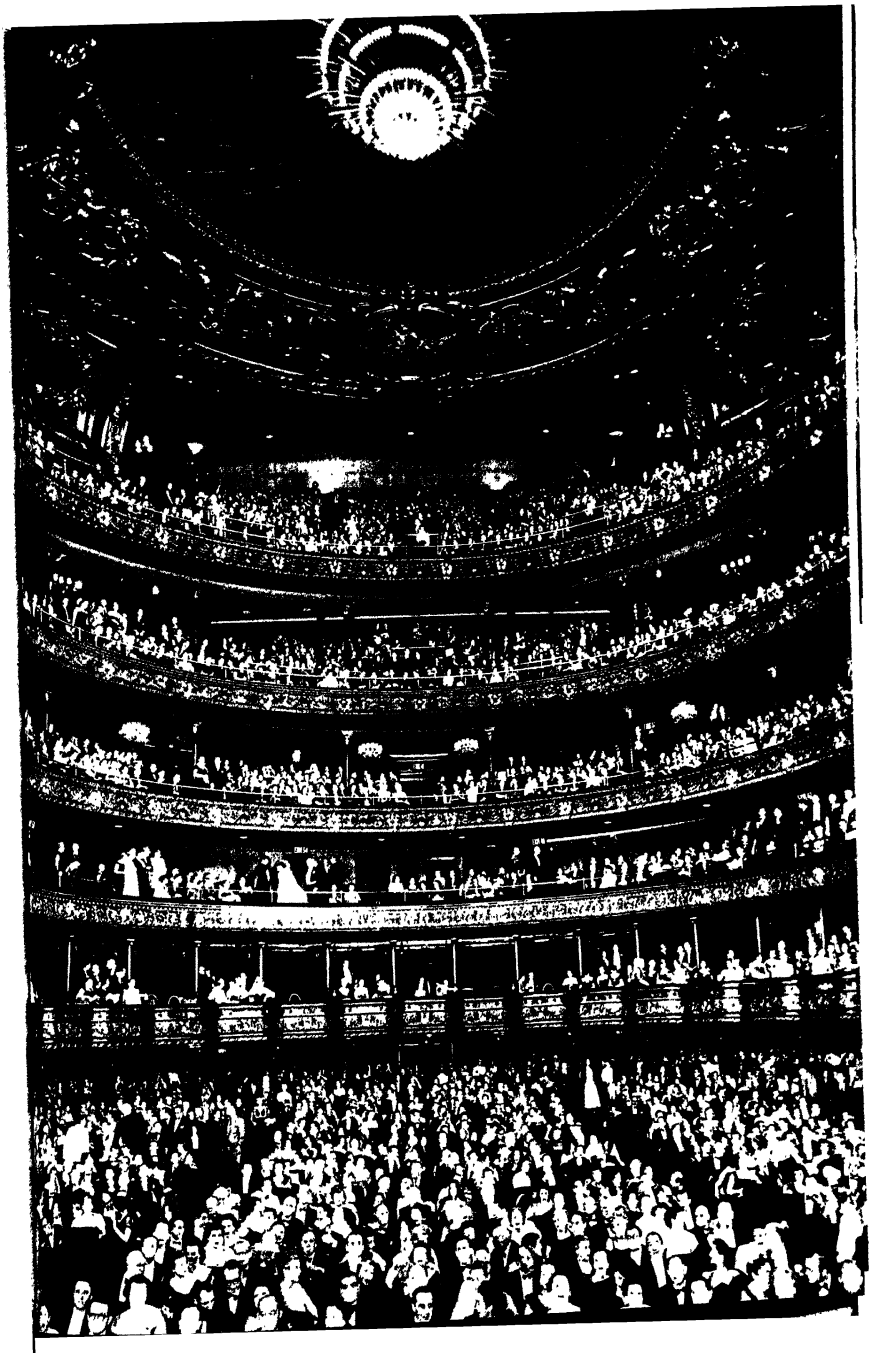
Although many thousands of operas have been written, fewer than a hundred are now preformed regularly. These well-known, constantly repeated operas form what is called the operatic repertory. Opera companies the world over—in London, Paris, Milan, Buenos Aires, New York—are always ready to perform the operas in the repertory. And opera singers, who also have a repertory of roles they know well, can be called on at any time to sing these parts when the operas are put on. Occasionally some old opera will be revived for a season to add new flavor to the operatic menu, and from time to time a new opera will be performed. If the new opera proves to be very popular with the opera audience it may gain a place in the opera repertory, but in recent years there have been very few operas that have achieved this form of immortality.

It was in Italy that opera came to flower. The earliest operas were plays accompanied by a few string instruments. The music served to make the ideas and emotions of the play more effective. The play was the important thing, not the music. As time

The old Metropolitan Opera House in New York, with its famous gold curtain

went on and the opera became a favorite form of entertainment for the wealthy Italian nobility, the performances became more and more lavish and spectacular. The stages were enormous, the scenery fantastic, with all manner of serpents, horses, elephants, and sea monsters cavorting about the stage. The characters were not mere mortals but gods and goddesses of Greek mythology, or emperors and empresses of Rome. The play became a mere rack on which to hang glamorous trappings.

The glamorous interior of the old Metropolitan Opera House



Audiences had their favorite singers, and soon came to hear the singing of these favorites rather than to enjoy a play with music.

Italian opera became a fad that spread all over Europe. The nobility invited Italian composers to their courts, showered honors upon them, and performed their works. And operas of other nations were correspondingly neglected. As a result, composers wanting to share in the sweet-tasting fruits of success turned out hundreds of operas in the pattern that had become so popular. Through constant repetition of this pattern, certain rigid customs developed. Every opera had to have a set number of characters, each of which must have a set number of arias to sing in a set order. Each act had to end with a set kind of ensemble. There had to be a ballet in the second act and choruses in other fixed places. The libretto had to take all these rules of operatic etiquette into consideration. It was a case of the tail wagging the dog. The play became secondary to the music.

In the middle of the eighteenth century a German composer, Christoph Willibald Gluck, had the courage to break away from this tradition of artificiality. He believed, as the earlier operatic writers did, that the drama was the primary thing and that the other aspects of the opera should follow the demands of the plot. His *Orpheus and Eurydice*, the oldest opera in the modern repertory, though written in Italian is not the traditional Italian opera. But although Gluck had some measure of success in his day, he did not alter the course of popular operatic taste. His ideas died with him and were not revived until almost a hundred years later.

Mozart, with whose amazing career and copious musical production you are already familiar, also contributed richly to the world's operatic repertory. Five of his twenty-two operas are

performed frequently today. For the most part Mozart did not stray from the path beaten by the Italian composers, though he did use a German libretto for one of his most popular operas, *The Magic Flute*, and for his *The Abduction from the Seraglio*. These were the first great operas written in the German language. His others, however, conform to the popular taste of the time and use Italian librettos. The plots and counterplots of the Mozart operas, like the Italian operas, are delightfully confused; but Mozart's lovely melodies, his colorful use of the orchestra, and his ability to create his characters through music lift such works as *Don Giovanni* and *The Marriage of Figaro* into the realm of imperishable masterpieces.

Two important Italian composers whose operas enjoy a warm spot in the hearts of audiences all over the world are Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868) and Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901). Of Rossini's thirty-eight operas, many were famous in their day, but only one survives in the repertory—the fresh, spirited comic opera *The Barber of Seville*, which is filled with sparkling melodies.

Verdi's contribution to the modern repertory is more substantial, and comprises such favorites as *Rigoletto, Il Trovatore, La Traviata,* and his later masterpieces, *Aïda, Otello,* and *Falstaff*. The stories of Verdi operas are usually melodramas of love, passion, bravery, treachery, patriotism, or sacrifice. Although many of the stories could not possibly have happened, the emotions felt by the characters and many of the ideals they strive for are very real. We can be moved by them and understand them even today, for there are certain feelings and ways of behaving that have been common to all peoples in all places down through the ages.

It is true that the librettos of the Verdi operas drip blood

and tears. Somebody always dies a tragic death. Emotions are overwrought and tensely dramatic. But these very qualities provided Verdi with the means for creating his marvelously exciting music. His ability to portray dramatic situations in beautifully expressive vocal melody has made the operas of Verdi universally moving and beloved. There is plenty of opportunity in these operas for singers to exhibit the luster and range of their voices. Verdi, like the other great Italian composers, understood the human voice and used it for all it was worth. But Verdi used singing not so much for its own sake, as so many other composers had done, but to heighten the emotional intensity of the plot. His orchestral writing, too, abounds with rich color, robust rhythms, flowing melody.

The big break away from the Italian style of opera was made by Richard Wagner (1813–83). This German composer, born in Leipzig, had the courage to create a completely new kind of opera. He believed so strongly in this new kind of opera that he wrote many books and treatises explaining his musical

Richard Wagner

The Festspielhaus, Bayreuth, 1876

theories. And because of his faith and perseverance he left us a heritage of great operatic works that form the core of the repertory of opera houses all over the world. These operas are: *The Flying Dutchman, Lohengrin, Tannhäuser,* the set of four operas known as *Der Ring des Nibelungen* [The Ring of the Nibelung]: *Das Rheingold* [The Rhine Gold], *Die Walküre* [The Valkyrie], *Siegfried,* and *Die Götterdämmerung* [The Twilight of the Gods], *Tristan und Isolde, Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* [The Mastersingers of Nuremberg], and *Parsifal.*

THE MUSIC DRAMA

The new kind of opera that Wagner created he called a music drama. Wagner wrote his own librettos in a unique style of dramatic poetry based on stories from mythology and folk legend. His poetry tends to be somewhat complex. But his characters are so strongly etched and their emotions portrayed with such deep understanding that they are as unforgettable as many of the characters of Shakespeare.

In the music drama Wagner went back to the basic idea of

opera, namely that the purpose of the music was solely to heighten the dramatic action of the play. But his methods of using music to achieve this end were new and original. Instead of being chopped up into arias, choruses, and separate tunes, Wagner's music flows along continuously with the poetry in what Wagner called "endless melody." The orchestra no longer serves as mere accompaniment, nor only as a means of intensifying emotion. The orchestra actually becomes a participant in the drama. It reminds us of what has happened in the past. It tells us things the characters on stage do not know. It can tell us what is going on in the characters' minds. It can even foretell what will happen in the future.

How does the orchestra do all this? Through a form of musical speech. This musical speech is based on a series of musical phrases called "leading motives"—short descriptive phrases that are vividly associated with some element of the opera such as a character, an object, or some idea or event. The river Rhine has its flowing, rippling motive. The golden ring, which brings death to whosoever possesses it, has its ominous, somber motive. The fire-breathing dragon, Fafner, who is slain by Siegfried, has his own threatening reptilian motive.

MOTIVES

The motive is generally introduced by the orchestra when the person or object or idea or event with which it is associated first makes its apearance or is first mentioned. It is then repeated at succeeding appearances or mentions of these characters, ideas, or events. As used by Wagner, these motives undergo changes to suit the mood or situation of the moment. For example, when Siegfried, hero of the Ring operas, first comes on the stage as a bold boy of the woods, the orchestra describes him with a fresh, bright musical motive given out by the horn. As he grows older, his motive becomes slower and more serious. When in

the end Siegfried meets a tragic death, the orchestra gives out his motive in heroic, mournful tones. Wagner varies these motives in innumerable musical ways to reveal changes in situations or persons or things. And they are also woven in and out of the orchestral playing like threads in a tapestry. Thus Wagner made music, libretto, and action inseparable.

Wagner also expanded and enlarged the orchestra to fit in with his ideas of the role of the orchestra in his musical dramas. Not only did he add to the actual number of instruments, but he opened up new avenues of expression for them, requiring them to do things that had formerly been unheard of. But the art of Wagner's orchestration stresses above all the blending and balance of the instruments in combination. When you listen to Wagner's music you cannot fail to hear the extraordinary richness and fullness of his chords no matter how softly the music may be played.

There have been a number of excellent operas added to the repertory in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Foremost among these are the well-beloved fairy tale opera *Hansel and Gretel* (1893) by Engelbert Humperdinck, and *Salome* (1905), *Elektra* (1909), and *Der Rosenkavalier* [The Cavalier of the Rose] (1911) by Richard Strauss. These two composers were German and both were strongly influenced by Wagner.

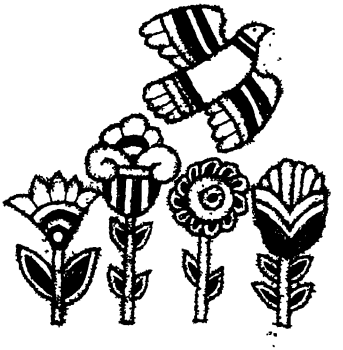
A French opera, *Carmen* (1875), by Georges Bizet, is surely one of the most popular in the opera repertory, combining believable characters and plot with highly melodic and dramatic music.

One outstanding Italian composer, Giacomo Puccini, added several frequently performed works to our store of opera: *Manon Lescaut* (1893), *La Bohème* (1896), *La Tosca* (1900),

The new Metropolitan Opera House at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. To the right is Philharmonic Hall and to the left is the New York State Theater.

Madama Butterfly (1904), and *Turandot* (1926). These operas are based on stories mostly about everyday people. With a true theatrical flair, they combine moving melodies like Verdi's with subtle touches of modern harmony and orchestration.

There are French, Czech, Russian, English, and American operas, too—all kinds and all styles—that have not been mentioned in this chapter. But the road to the enjoyment of each and every one of them is the same: Read the story before you see or hear it, and let the music carry you away from reality.



12/ The Symphonic Poem

The symphonic poem is a large work for orchestra that follows no set musical form and is played in one single movement. This does not mean that the music just wanders about aimlessly. Each symphonic poem does have its own pattern. But the pattern or form of the music, and its style as well, is more or less determined by a poem or a poetic idea of the composer's choice. Sometimes a poem is actually presented with the composition; sometimes just the title will suggest the idea behind the music.

It was Franz Liszt who invented the term "symphonic poem." For most of his series of twelve symphonic poems he chose actual poems or portions of poems, and attempted to portray

in a musical way what the poet had conveyed in his poetry. He felt that the substance, the meaning, and the emotional tone of the poem should dictate the form of the music. He was trying to bring about a closer relationship between literature and music, and believed that the musical form in each individual case would grow out of the content of the poetry.

Although only one of Liszt's symphonic poems—*Les Préludes*—is still played today, his influence on later composers is extremely important. Liszt is largely responsible for the fact that the symphonic poem is an accepted form in our times.

Nowadays when we hear the term "symphonic poem," the composer whose name often comes to mind is Richard Strauss. At least six of his symphonic poems, which he called "tone poems," are played regularly in the concert hall today. These are: *Don Juan, Death and Transfiguration, Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks, Thus Spake Zarathustra, Don Quixote,* and *A Hero's Life.*

Richard Strauss was a German composer who was born in 1864 and died in 1949. When he first started to compose, his music followed the old traditional style. Although he was highly gifted musically, this earlier music had little that was new or original to offer. It was the influence of a friend, who urged him to develop his music along the lines of Berlioz, Liszt, and Wagner, which caused his music to take a different turn.

This turn was in the direction of a more expressive, descriptive type of music. The symphonic poem proved to be the ideal medium for Strauss's aims and gifts. Here he could establish the form of each "tone poem" according to his musical needs, choosing the form which would best suit his ideas. Here, also, he had ample scope and opportunity to create highly descriptive music.

Richard Strauss

Strauss uses all kinds of subjects as inspiration for his symphonic poems, and generally succeeds admirably in accomplishing what Liszt set out to do. His writing for the instruments of the orchestra is tremendously skillful and imaginative. His use of the individual instruments to describe different characters in his works is an outstanding characteristic of Strauss's compositions. In *Don Quixote,* for example, the viola represents the character Sancho Panza. In his *A Hero's Life* (generally referred to by its German title of *Ein Heldenleben*), the solo violin represents the Mate, actually his wife. The Adversaries are characterized by wrangling, carping passages in the tubas and the woodwinds. (Strauss here hits back at those critics who had made disparaging criticisms of his works.)

By his imaginative use of instruments, Strauss often produces boldly humorous and realistic effects. In *Don Quixote* you hear the bleating of a herd of sheep reproduced with delightful accuracy by the brasses. In this work, too, Strauss uses a wind machine—the apparatus used in the theater to reproduce the sound of wind.

ORCHESTRATION

But clever and ingenious as this sort of realistic imitation is, it should not be considered the most important part of Strauss's orchestral genius. For Strauss is a great master of orchestration —the art of employing the instruments of the orchestra in accordance with their own special tone colors and individual characters. He almost always uses a large orchestra modeled after the orchestra of Wagner. But he expanded even Wagner's orchestra, and found new and original uses for the individual instruments. He wrote passages for certain instruments that up to that time had been considered beyond the normal range for those instruments. In his music are also found passages of such great difficulty that before then they would have been judged impossible of performance. In these ways Strauss had an important influence on raising the standards of orchestral playing.

Through his extraordinary talent for orchestration, and through the creation of fine melodies as well, Strauss produced passages of wonderful beauty and exceptional richness of tone color. And in many of his works, especially in *Till Eulenspiegel,* there are instances of delightful humor.

When Strauss's tone poems first burst upon the musical world they caused a storm of argument and agitation, as new and daring developments in any art form so often do. One of the criticisms was "formlessness"—decidedly an unfounded objection, for each of his tone poems has a quite formal design. In *Till Eulenspiegel,* for example, the form is a rondo, a classic form.

Claude Debussy

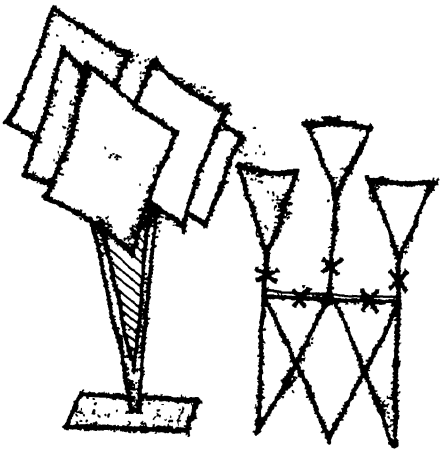
For *Don Quixote* Strauss uses the variation form, and in *Ein Heldenleben* the form resembles very closely that of the sonata.

Another criticism was that in his works you hear some passages of quite *un*lovely sounds, especially in some of his realistic representations. This charge may have some truth, but these passages are only a small part of the whole and have very little significance today.

Despite these original denunciations, Strauss lived to see his tone poems become standard works for orchestra. He also lived to see the influence that his works had upon orchestration and upon the standards of orchestral performance as well.

You have probably heard the symphonic poems of other composers, perhaps without realizing that they were symphonic poems. Some of these are: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Dukas, *Danse Macabre* by Saint-Saëns, *The Afternoon of a Faun* by

Debussy (called a "prelude" by the composer), the overture *Romeo and Juliet* by Tchaikovsky (actually a symphonic poem), *The Moldau* by Smetana. The composer of a symphonic poem assumes that everyone knows the literary or poetic idea which brought forth the music. Therefore becoming familiar with the story before hearing the music played might help you to realize and appreciate the composer's intentions. But it should also be kept in mind that no musical work should be judged solely by how closely or how cleverly it depicts literary ideas or situations. Music, if it is to be considered worthy or great, must be able to stand on its own feet as music.



13/ *Modern Trends*

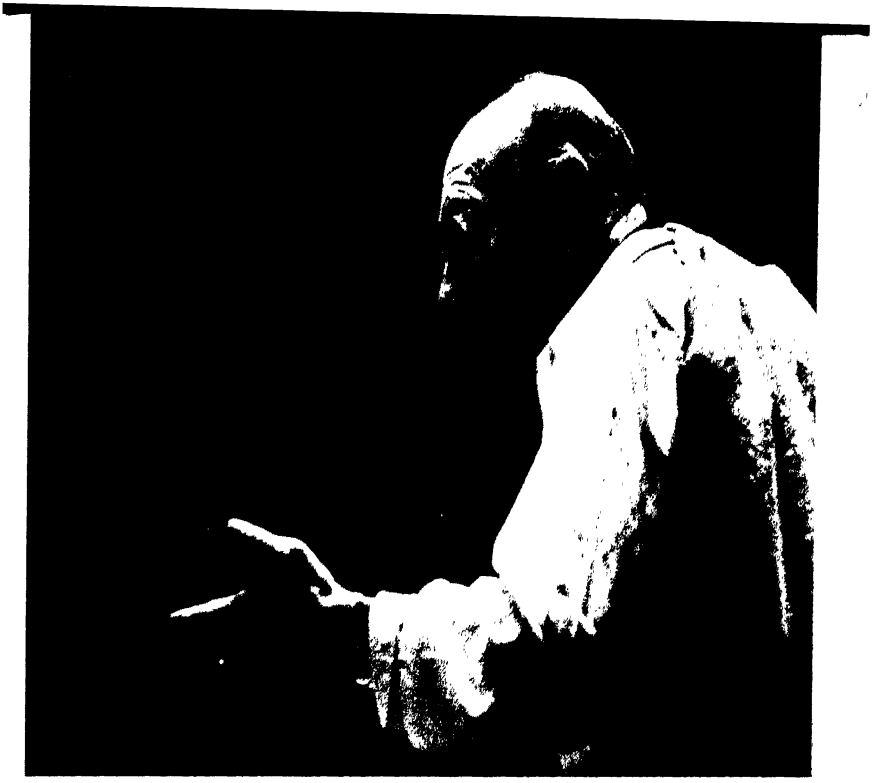
As in art and literature, throughout the history of music there have always been those artists who have wanted to go beyond the musical language of their day, to say things in a new way, or even to say new things in a new way. You have seen how this was so with Beethoven, with Wagner, with Richard Strauss. They all began composing in the manner of the composers who came before them, gradually adding their own new ideas as their creative talents directed them. We have also seen how sometimes composers who are trying to say something new or different are not appreciated in their own lifetime, but unfortunately have to wait for posterity to honor them.

This does not mean, however, that every odd- or unfamiliar-

sounding piece of music is a work of genius. There are those who tend to praise all "modern" music without discrimination, just because it is modern. And there are others, at the opposite extreme, who throw up their hands in horror and close their ears to any music that sounds the slightest bit novel or unfamiliar.

These are extremes, of course. But how should one listen to modern music? First of all, you must have an open mind; nobody who is prejudiced either way beforehand is going to make an intelligent listener. Perhaps you will never like Bartók as well as Beethoven; on the other hand, you might come to prefer him to Beethoven. Secondly, it is important to try to understand some of the things that modern composers are trying to say and the new ways in which they are trying to say them. Thirdly, the more you hear modern music, the more familiar the language becomes, and the more meaning that language has for you. If you hear two foreigners talking together it may sound like gibberish. But if you understand their language you will know what they are talking about.

In the beginning of this book we said that music was made up of the patterns of melody, rhythm, and harmony. A composer is an inventor of patterns, an explorer of the tonal world. The development of music therefore has been a continuing development of new patterns. It is frequently difficult for the ear, which has become accustomed to the old familiar patterns, to grasp the new ones. Thus much new music at first seems planless—that is, patternless. With more and more listening, however, its design will usually become evident. Stravinsky's epoch-making *Le Sacre du Printemps* [*The Rite of Spring*], written in 1913, violently disturbed the audience and was greeted at its first performance with expressions of hostility. Yet in 1941,



Igor Stravinsky

less than thirty years later, some of the music of this same work was included in Walt Disney's popular film *Fantasia.* In other words, Stravinsky's musical language was no longer strange and unfamiliar and shocking; people had been slowly becoming acquainted with its idioms by hearing it, and other music like it, throughout the years, until it had become "popular."

IMPRESSIONISTIC MUSIC

One of the early important pioneers in modern music was Claude Debussy, a French composer who lived from 1862 to 1918. His type of music was called "impressionistic"—that is, he tried to give the feeling of impressions or moods, suggestions of atmosphere. If you listen to any of Debussy's orchestral pieces—*Prélude à l' Après-midi d'un Faune* [*Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*], *La Mer* [*The Sea*], *Iberia,* for example—

you will readily get this feeling of mood and atmosphere, of subtle suggestions. Debussy also devised new melodic and harmonic patterns, many of which departed radically from the existing standards of his time. A great number of Debussy's contributions to the language of music have been widely adopted by contemporary composers.

Besides composing many colorful and imaginative piano pieces, many sensitive songs, a number of fine orchestral works, and a string quartet, Debussy also composed one opera, *Pelléas et Mélisande*, a setting of the play by Maurice Maeterlinck. The unusual and important characteristic of this opera is that, unlike most operas, the orchestral music portrays a minimum of dramatic expression and the vocal parts are written in almost tuneless chant. Yet it is music of a suggestive, delicate, quiet sort, and it also has depth and strength.

Debussy is only one of the many composers who have contributed to the development of modern music. It is not our intention here to go into all the intricacies of this development, but merely to point out a few of the ways you yourself may hear, become familiar with, and perhaps even perform some of this new music. Modern music is not only for adults or for the initiated few, but for everyone.

THE BALLET

In recent years there has been a tremendous revival of interest in the ballet. In a ballet program today one is apt to see at least one ballet for which a modern composer has written the music. In the early nineteen-hundreds the Russian Sergei Diaghilev, famous organizer of the Ballet Russe, commissioned many composers to write music for his ballet company. Some of these composers were at the time unknown and obscure, and many of them were given public attention for the first time through Diaghilev's ballet. The music of the great modern com-

A performance by the New York City Ballet of The Firebird

poser Igor Stravinsky (1882–) first received public notice through the music he composed for this ballet company. Among these ballets are the now well-known *L'Oiseau de Feu* [*The Firebird*], *The Rite of Spring*, and *Petrushka*. Excerpts from these works, arranged as orchestral suites, are often heard in the concert hall today.

Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* and Manuel de Falla's *The Three-Cornered Hat* are also famous ballets composed for Diaghilev's ballet company.

Aaron Copland (1900–), the modern American composer, has composed music for three fine ballets: *Billy the Kid*, *Appalachian Spring*, and *Rodeo*. Khachaturian's *Gayne Suite*, Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*, and Leonard Bernstein's *Fancy Free* are some other examples of modern ballets.

Aaron Copland

MUSIC FOR MOTION PICTURES

Moving pictures have also provided opportunities for a number of modern composers. Perhaps you are so engrossed in the picture that you are barely aware of the music that often accompanies it. And yet several well-known composers have done musical scores for the films, especially during the nineteen-thirties. Arthur Honegger (1892–1955) composed music for at least thirty-five films, among them *Pygmalion.* The distinguished Russian composer, Sergei Prokofiev (1891–1953), wrote music for many Russian films, including *Lieutenant Kije* and *Alexander Nevsky*. Aaron Copland composed music for the films *Of Mice and Men, Our Town, The Red Pony*, and *The Heiress.* Another American composer, Virgil Thomson, wrote music for *The Plow that Broke the Plains, The River,* and *Louisiana Story*. Many of these film scores have been arranged

by their composers to be played as orchestral suites in the concert hall.

MUSIC FOR YOUNG PERFORMERS

There are still other ways in which you may become familiar with modern music, or even perform it yourself. Several well-known modern composers have written works which have been designed especially for performance by young people. They are modern, but not so complicated and difficult technically as are the majority of modern works. Paul Hindemith (1895–1963) wrote an opera, *We Build a City*, which was to be performed by children. The contemporary British composer Benjamin Britten (1913–), composer of the operas *Peter Grimes*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, and *The Turn of the Screw*, and many choral works, has written a work for children entitled *Let's Make an Opera*. This is designed to be performed by adult actors for an audience of young people who participate by singing the choral parts. Aaron Copland's *The Second Hurricane* is a "play opera for high school performance," and Kurt Weill's folk opera, *Down in the Valley*, based on a well-known American folk tune, was written for performance by college students.

A number of other modern composers have composed works in the modern idiom but without the usual technical difficulties, designed to be performed by amateurs and young people. These compositions have been deliberate attempts on the part of contemporary composers to bring good modern music to a wider audience.

Other composers who, like Debussy and Stravinsky, have made significant contributions to modern music are the German Arnold Schoenberg (1874–1951) whose so-called twelve-tone technique has had a tremendous influence on later composers; and the Hungarian Béla Bartók (1881–1945) whose distinctive

musical style is based upon the scales and melodic patterns of Hungarian folk music.

JAZZ STYLE

Another important musical development in the twentieth century was the blossoming of jazz in the United States. Our own American composer George Gershwin (1898–1937) used the jazz idiom in most of his music. His *Rhapsody in Blue*, a work for piano and orchestra, was an attempt at writing a "symphonic" work in jazz style. Similarly, his Piano Concerto in F contains strong jazz elements. Jazz has had its influence on many other composers from many countries since about 1918.

A real pioneer in musical composition was the American Charles Ives (1874–1954). In his music, which is thoroughly American in character, you will hear snatches of hymn tunes, patriotic songs, popular melodies, and even early jazz styles intermingled with his highly unconventional and radical harmonies. In his *Three Places in New England*, for example, a large orchestral work, we hear fragments of the familiar Civil War songs "Marching Through Georgia" and "The Battle Cry of Freedom." In another section of this work marching tunes and patriotic songs—among them a favorite of the Revolutionary army, "The British Grenadier"—haphazardly weave in and out. Artistic recognition came very late to Charles Ives, but his music has had an important influence on younger American composers.

AVANT-GARDE MUSIC

Composers continue to explore new possibilities in the realm of musical creation. We call the most recent attempts to widen musical horizons in different and new ways avant-garde music. (*Avant-garde* is a French expression used to refer to leaders in an intellectual or artistic movement or their works.) Perhaps

ELECTRONIC MUSIC

you have heard electronic music. Here the possibilities of the use of electronic tape are being explored. This creating and

Edgard Varèse

manipulating of sound through electronic tape recording is one way in which some avant-garde musicians are experimenting. Edgard Varèse (1885–1965) pioneered in the use of mechanical sounds in music in the 1920s and 1930s, and in the 1950s started composing electronic music. One such work is *Deserts*, a composition for winds, percussion, and tape-recorded sound. Karlheinz Stockhausen in Germany and Milton Babbitt in America are two leaders in the field of electronic composition.

Another avant-garde movement in music is the continuing search for new uses of instruments, such as the "prepared" piano where objects like thumbtacks or paper are placed on the strings or hammers, thus altering the sound. The "prepared" piano was invented by John Cage, who has been experimenting with new ways of producing music since the 1930s.

A "prepared" piano

ALEATORY MUSIC

The so-called aleatory, or chance-created, music is still another recent development in musical composition. To many listeners these avant-garde creations do not seem to be music at all because they depart so radically from the elements of music to which we have become accustomed. There are no familiar patterns of melody, harmony, and rhythm such as we know them. But our ears and our minds have not yet had enough opportunity to grasp and comprehend this newest musical language fully. We will therefore have to wait and see what influence it will have on the development of music.

Glossary

Adagio: slow

Aleatory: chance-created

Allegro: fast, lively

Andante: "walking pace," that is, a moderate tempo

Aria: a solo song with accompaniment

Art song: a poem, or sometimes a piece of prose, set to music for voice and accompanying instrument, usually the piano

Avant-garde music: the exploration of new possibilities in the realm of musical creation; music that is ahead of popular taste

Baton: the short stick used by some conductors to give directions to performers

Cadenza: in a concerto, a brilliant unaccompanied section for the soloist

Cantata: in Bach's usage, a composition for the church service, consisting of six or seven pieces for solo singers, chorus, organ, and orchestra

Chord: sound created by playing two or more tones at the same time

Coda: the conclusion or tail end of a movement

Concerto: a composition for orchestra and solo instrument (or sometimes more than one) of symphonic dimensions, usually in three movements

Conductor: the director of an orchestra who chooses the music, rehearses the musicians, and conducts the concert

Consonant chord: a chord that sounds restful

Development: in the sonata form, the section where the themes presented in the exposition are developed

Dissonant chord: a chord that is in a state of unrest and gives a restless feeling

Duet: music for two performers

Duration: the relative longness or shortness of a musical tone

Electronic music: music produced by the manipulation of tape-recorded sounds

Ensemble: a group of performers

Exposition: the first section of the sonata form, in which the themes of the movement are presented

Fantasia: a freely constructed instrumental composition

Form: the framework or plan of construction of a musical composition

Folk song: a song, by no known composer, that has been passed down from generation to generation

Fugue: a composition that treats a single melodic idea in a polyphonic (many-voiced) manner

Fugue subject: the melodic idea or theme of a fugue

Glissando: on the harp, the effect achieved by a quick sweep of the fingers over the strings. (This term is also used to describe a gliding effect in other instruments.)

Harmony: the art of constructing chords and of arranging attractive successions or consonant and dissonant chords

Intensity: the relative loudness or softness of a musical tone

Invention: the name Bach gave to a short, two-voiced clavier piece

Libretto: the text of an opera

Melody: a meaningful succession of musical tones

Movement: a self-contained section of a suite, symphony, concerto, string quartet, or sonata.

Music drama: the term used by Wagner for his later operas

Opera: a play whose characters sing, to the accompaniment of an orchestra, rather than speak

Orchestration: the art of employing the instruments of the orchestra in accordance with their own special tone colors and individual characters

Overture: an orchestral composition that serves as an introduction to an opera or play; or at times an independent single movement for symphony orchestra having some descriptive purpose, called a concert overture

Partita: another designation for a suite

Pitch: the relative highness or lowness of a musical tone

Pizzicato: plucking the strings of a string instrument with the fingers, producing short-clipped sounds

Prelude: an introductory piece; in keyboard music, often in freely constructed form; in Wagner's later operas, the title he gave to the overture

Presto: very fast

Recapitulation: in the sonata form, the third section, consisting for the most part of the repetition of the exposition

Rhythm: patterns of accent produced by the stressing or lengthening of certain tones

Scherzo: in Beethoven's music, a boisterous movement in a fast tempo

Sonata: usually a composition for piano, or for another instrument with piano, in three or four movements

Sonata form: the form frequently appearing in the first movements, and often in later movements, in instrumental works with titles such as sonata, string quartet, symphony, concerto

String quartet: an instrumental ensemble consisting of two violins, viola, and cello; also, music written for such a group

Suite: in Bach's day, a composition for a keyboard instrument consisting of a set of pieces in various dance styles

Symphonic poem: a work for orchestra in a single movement and with a descriptive title

Symphony: a comparatively long orchestral composition, usually divided into four sections (movements)

Synoptic overture: an overture that gives a synopsis of the work it introduces

Tempo: the speed of a musical composition

Theme: a musical idea

Three-part form: one of the most common of musical forms, consisting of three main sections: A B A

Tone color: the characteristic quality of sound produced by a particular instrument or voice

Tone poem: Richard Strauss's term for his symphonic poems

Transcription: an arrangement of a work for an instrument or ensemble other than the one for which it was originally composed

Variations: a series of modifications of a theme

Vivace: lively

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